



PLAYSTATION 3

PlayStation Portable

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Issue 034 August 2009 £5.99
officialplaystationmagazine.com

**HUGE SONY
BLOWOUT!**

God Of War III
Gran Turismo 5
Uncharted 2
Heavy Rain

Brink

The future of shooters has arrived

The return of Metal Gear Solid
James Cameron talks Avatar
PS3's motion sensing controller
Fight Night Round 4 review

Why Japan is mad for
Monster Hunter



MODNATION RACERS PSPgo



FINAL FANTASY XIV AGENT



PRE-ORDER NOW AT **GAME** AND YOU'LL
GET THE **FLAMMENWERFER** FROM THE START,
A POWERFUL WEAPON NORMALLY AVAILABLE
HALF WAY THROUGH THE SINGLE PLAYER CAMPAIGN.

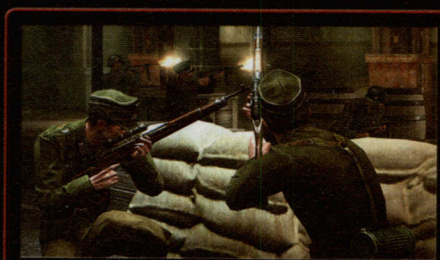
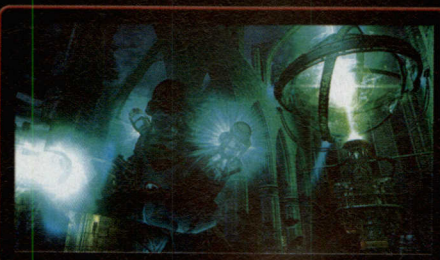


"THE GODFATHER OF FIRST-PERSON
SHOOTERS RETURNS"

XBOX 360 THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Wolfenstein™

7TH AUGUST 2009



PLAYSTATION 3



Games for Windows



XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE



ACTIVISION®

activision.com

© 2009 id Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Published and distributed by Activision Publishing, Inc. under license. Wolfenstein™ is a trademark and ID® is a registered trademark of id Software, Inc. in the United States and some other countries. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. "D" and "PLAYSTATION" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and "Games for Windows" and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Welcome



Yes, this month they've let the crazy sports man sit in the big chair. The good news: it's 8/10 for comfort. The better news: I've subdued my burning urge to put Madden NFL 10 on the cover. Somehow.

Even so, you might have been a tiny bit surprised to see new Splash Damage shooter Brink staring back at you when you pulled the mag from its wrapper. But you shouldn't be. While its contemporaries plaster over the same staid concepts with glossy wallpaper, Brink is attempting something genuinely fresh and potentially revolutionary. OPM's Nathan recently became the first journalist in the world to see it at the company's Bromley base, and his sneak peak confirms that it's shaping up to be special.

Our other huge scoop covers more than just one game. We've spent this month travelling to the ends of the Earth and back (well... London and Los Angeles) to bring you unrivalled access to every upcoming first-party exclusive. Gran Turismo 5, MAG, God Of War III, Uncharted 2, Heavy Rain – they're all in our 24-page Sony blowout, alongside interviews with the company's top brass. No Madden, then, but I think you'll prefer it this way.

Ben Wilson
Deputy editor
ben.wilson@futurenet.com

COVER FEATURE



96 BRINK

World exclusive first look at the game that's set to redefine the entire shooter genre.

Save
15%
Off every issue
See page 23

FEATURES



84 LITTLEBIGPLANET DEATHMATCH

OPM team makes LBP levels, then has them judged by its creators – and the community.



94 IN THE MOOD FOR... VAMPIRES

They're immortal and work the pale look perfectly. Our favourite gaming bloodboozers.



58 PLAYSTATION 3: THE NEW WAVE

Secret access to Uncharted 2, God Of War III, Heavy Rain, and every other Sony exclusive.

THE BIG 10 STORIES

Metal Gear Solid Is Back	10
PS3's New	
Motion-Sensing Controller	14
Rockstar's Secret	
Agent Uncovered	15
Final Fantasy XIV!	16
Gran Turismo 5 Interview	17
Hands On With	
Uncharted 2's Multiplayer	18
PS3 Meets Phone	19
Kojima To Save Castlevania?	20
VidZone Lands At Last	21
Is Hawk's Skateboard	
Peripheral A Good Idea?	22

AGENDA

Informer	26
Why the Japanese heart Monster Hunter.	
Culture	28
The car that Gran Turismo built.	
Personal	30
How tiny worms attacked a marriage.	
Tech	31
The shiniest pearls from the gadget oyster.	
Sony	32
Take on Spielberg with this tiny handycam.	
Events	34
Win tickets to see rock gods Metallica.	

PREVIEWS

Avatar	38
Max Payne 3	41
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	42
Homefront	44
Assassin's Creed II	45
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	46

Dead Rising 2	47
Aliens Vs Predator	48
Dante's Inferno	50
Operation Flashpoint:	
Dragon Rising	51
Detuned	51
Lost Planet 2	52
Mini Ninjas	52
Sonic And Sega	
All-Stars Racing	53
The Latest On...	54

FEATURES

PlayStation 3: The New Wave	58
The biggest exclusives in minute detail.	
Sony's Little Surprise	76
Everything you need to know about PSPgo.	
inFamous V Prototype	82
Alex and Cole go head to head.	
LBP Deathmatch	84
One game, one day, four broken levels.	
In The Mood For... Vampires	94
Cover your neck! Gaming's sexiest suckers.	
Brink	96
Meet Splash Damage's brand new shooter.	

REVIEWS

Fight Night Round 4	106
Call Of Juarez:	
Bound In Blood	110
Rock Band: Unplugged	112
Pain	113
Burnout Paradise:	
Big Surf Island	114
Monster Hunter:	
Freedom Unite	115
Metal Gear Solid	116



106 FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

Bob, duck, weave, WHACK! EA's big boxer makes a triumphant return to the ring.



110 CALL OF JUAREZ: BOUND IN BLOOD

The cowboy shooter that's less Wild West, more Just North Of Mediocre.

Final Fantasy VII	116
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	117
Prinny: Can I Really	
Be The Hero?	118
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	118
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	119
Cross Edge	119
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	119
Online:	
UFC 2009: Undisputed	120

DIRECTORIES

PS3 Directory	126
PSP Directory	128

Every month only in

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Expert opinion on every PS3, PSP + PS2 game The latest PlayStation news direct from Sony **Unrivalled behind-the-scenes access** In-depth coverage of the games you want to play **Features you won't find anywhere else** More pages, more games, more PlayStation than any other magazine.

Next issue on sale
4 August



PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Who we are...



Tim Clark
Editor-in-chief

Left E3 and headed straight to Portugal to wash away the stress with sun and Madeira.

Game of the month
Uncharted 2 Beta
Pick of E3
Warhammer 40,000 SM



Ben Wilson
Deputy editor

With Tim away, Ben ruled over the issue with a sharp eye, a steely resolve and a Girls Aloud playlist.

Game of the month
Rock Band 2
Pick of E3
Uncharted 2



Leon Hurley
Commissioning editor

Tweets on family holiday included "Oh, God" and "Death? I'm ready now."

Game of the month
Battlefield Bad Company
Pick of E3
The Last Guardian



Rachel Penny
News editor

Argued it was okay to fancy the bloke from Twilight because, "He looks 17, but he's actually 104."

Game of the month
Fallout 3's DLC
Pick of E3
The Last Guardian



Nathan Ditung
Reviews editor

Showed true dedication to his VidZone review by spending a whole day ogling pretty indie girls.

Game of the month
Uncharted
Pick of E3
Agent



Helen Wooley
Operations editor

Became the office UFC champion for ten minutes after mastering the art of button-mashing.

Game of the month
UFC 2009 Undisputed
Pick of E3
Guitar Hero 5



David Boddington
Content producer

Jetted off to E3 for the first time full of hope and dreams. Came back full of steak, booze and sadness.

Game of the month
Infamous
Pick of E3
Warhammer 40,000 SM



James Jarvis
Assistant producer

Took advice on relationships from the team. Life now ruined.

Game of the month
Xi
Pick of E3
Uncharted 2

Subscribe to OPM now



1 ONLINE

myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/
POM/P034

2 TELEPHONE

0844 848 2852 quoting reference P034



PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW, United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0) 1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0) 1225 732275
Email opm@futurenet.com Web futurenet.com

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief Tim Clark tim.clark@futurenet.com
Deputy editor Ben Wilson ben.wilson@futurenet.com
Art editor Mark Wynne mark.wynne@futurenet.com
Deputy art editor Steve Gallagher steve.gallagher@futurenet.com
Operations editor Helen Wooley helen.wooley@futurenet.com
Commissioning editor Leon Hurley leon.hurley@futurenet.com
Reviews editor Nathan Ditung nathan.ditung@futurenet.com
News editor Rachel Penny rachel.penny@futurenet.com
Content producer David Boddington david.boddington@futurenet.com
Assistant producer James Jarvis james.jarvis@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Writers Jon Blyth, Matt Elliott, Paul Fitzpatrick, Ben Healy,
David Meikleham, Louis Pattison, Will Porter, George Walter
Designers Jonathan Billington, Mike Brennan
Production Michael Monypenny

Creative director Robin Abbott
Design director Matthew Williams
Editorial director Jim Douglas

ADVERTISING

Sales director Malcolm Stoodley malcolm.stoodley@futurenet.com
Advertising director Mark Hanrahan mark.hanrahan@futurenet.com
Ad manager (print) Jas Rai jas.rai@futurenet.com
Ad manager (online) Andrew Church andrew.church@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive Dan Lessons dan.lessons@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive Oliver Chislett oliver.chislett@futurenet.com
Sales executive Alistair Williams alistair.williams@futurenet.com
Sales executive Mark Wooldridge mark.wooldridge@futurenet.com

MARKETING

Trade marketing manager Stuart Agnew stuart.agnew@futurenet.com
Trade marketing executive Matt Cooper matt.cooper@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION

International Account Manager John Lawton john.lawton@futurenet.com
Trade marketing director Rachael Cock rachael.cock@futurenet.com

PRINT & PRODUCTION

Head of production Richard Mason richard.mason@futurenet.com
Production manager Rose Griffiths rose.griffiths@futurenet.com
Production co-ordinator Vivienne Turner vivienne.turner@futurenet.com
Buyer Colin Polis colin.polis@futurenet.com

LICENSING

International licensing director Tim Hudson tim.hudson@futurenet.com
Tel +44 (0)1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0)1225 732275

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED

Publisher Richard Keith richard.Keith@futurenet.com
Publishing director James Binns james.binns@futurenet.com
Chief operating officer Simon Wear
UK Chief executive Robert Price

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone our UK hotline on 0844 848 1602
Subscribe online at myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 4 AUGUST 2009
Printed in the UK by William Gibbons on behalf of Future.
Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd,
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT. Tel: 0207 429 4000

Want to work for Future
Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs

ABC A member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations
53,444
1 Jul - 31 Dec 2008



Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines, websites and events for people who share a passion. We publish more than 170 magazines and websites and 100 international editions of our titles are published across the world.

Future plc is a public company
quoted on the London Stock
Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

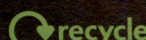
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive: Stevie Spring
Non-executive Chairman: Roger Parry
Group Finance Director: John Bowman
Tel +44 (0)20 7042 4000 (London)
Tel +44 (0)1225 442244 (Bath)

© Future Publishing Limited 2009. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. The registered office of Future Publishing Limited is at Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. All information contained in this magazine is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. Readers are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this magazine. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.



The text paper in this magazine is totally chlorine free. The paper manufacturer and Future Publishing have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

OUT NOW!



FALLEN ANGEL SACRED2



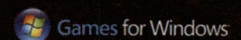
DETERMINE THE FATE OF ANCARIA...

- EXPLORE A MASSIVE, SEAMLESS FANTASY WORLD
- UNIQUELY PLAYABLE CHARACTERS & EPIC MOUNTS
- DROP-IN/ DROP-OUT, PVP & COOP MULTIPLAYER

WWW.SACRED2.COM



PLAYSTATION 3



Sacred 2 © Fallen Angel © Ascaron Entertainment GmbH 2009. Sacred, the Sacred logo, Ascaron, and the Ascaron logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Ascaron Entertainment GmbH. All Rights Reserved. Published 2008 by Deep Silver, a division of Koch Media GmbH. Windows, the Windows Vista start button, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and Games for Windows and the Windows Vista Start button logo are used under license from Microsoft.

PS3 and PLAYSTATION are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

On your disc



Woowoo! Hear those sirens? That's me rounding up this month's most wanted demos. Locked up in my paddy van of delights you'll find the dastardly hitman Fight Night Round 4,

wanted for packing the best-looking punches on PS3. Marvel Vs Capcom 2 is under arrest for inciting super-

fun violence, and smash-'em-up shooter Red Faction:

Guerrilla is up on a serious vandalism charge. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10 needs to call its lawyer fast about stealing some impossible shots. And sweet old Pixar's Up: The Video Game? So cute it's illegal. Take 'em away boys.

Rachel Penny News editor

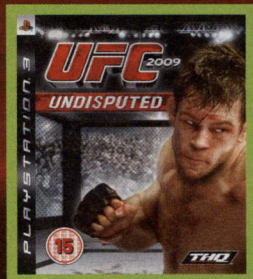


Switch your PS3 on, find the Game icon on the XMB bar and then select 'OPSM - UK Blu-ray Demo 2009/3/4'

Fight Night Round 4

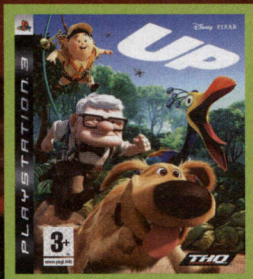
Prepare to batter, block and bleed. This salty taster of life in the ring gives you three rounds to recreate the epic May bout between Manny Pacquiao and Ricky Hatton. And in your hands, Hitman might actually win.

This month's exclusive highlights...



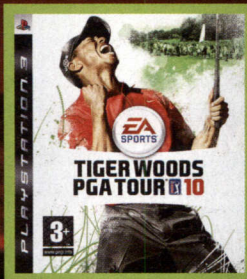
UFC 2009 Undisputed

Mixed martial arts brilliance. Ground and pound as Chuck 'Iceman' Liddell and Mauricio 'Shogun' Rua.



Up: The Video Game

Based on Pixar's summer hit, this adventure weaves platforming magic from a chubby child, a septuagenarian, and a lot of balloons.



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10

Get to work on your swing before putting it to good use in the bunkers and bushes of the US Open.



Red Faction: Guerrilla

Sample the multiplayer mayhem with two maps, nine WMDs and backpacks that give you special powers.



What if my disc doesn't work?

If it definitely doesn't work, send the disc to Disc Returns, OPM, 30 Monmouth St. Bath BA1 2BW and we'll replace it. You can also email questions to opm@futurenet.com.

Also on the disc this month: Playable Red Faction: Guerrilla (single player), Marvel Vs Capcom 2, Wheelman, Tom Clancy's HAWX, Skate 2, Motorstorm: Pacific Rift, NHL 09, NBA Live 09, WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009, Sonic Unleashed, Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway, Mercenaries 2: World In Flames **Video** Tekken 6, Red Dead Redemption.

BEFORE
SEEING

Harry Potter

AND THE
HALF-BLOOD
PRINCE™

IN
CINEMAS

RELIVE THE MAGIC OF
YEARS 1-5 ON BLU-RAY



BLU-RAY. THE WAY MOVIES ARE MEANT TO BE LIVED
AMAZING HIGH DEFINITION PICTURE • SEAMLESS MENU NAVIGATION • SCRATCH RESISTANT



BOX SET INCLUDES ALL 5 FILMS

ON  **Blu-ray Disc**

NOW AT

hmv
hmv.com

WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENTS
A J.K. ROWLING PRODUCTION
HEYDAY FILMS

HARRY POTTER characters, names and related indicia are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
Harry Potter Publishing Rights © J.K.R. © 2009 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.



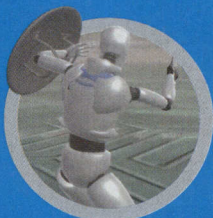
The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about...

Moving on

Sony's new motion controller.

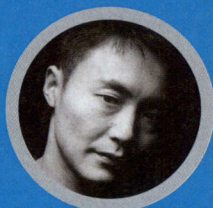
► **Page 14**



Secret Agent

Rockstar's brand new PS3 exclusive.

► **Page 15**



Motor mouth

OPM meets Mr Gran Turismo.

► **Page 17**



Uncharted 2

We take Drake online in new multiplayer.

► **Page 18**

Sound advice

Our verdict on PS3's VidZone.

► **Page 21**



PSP - MGS: Peace Walker

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



1

Metal Gear Solid is back

Everything you need to know about both new games – Rising on PS3 and Peace Walker for PSP

Smoke and mirrors, misdirection and jokes lost in translation – for Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima, E3 2009 was strictly business as usual. First – for fans of a hitherto exclusive PlayStation series – he did the unthinkable: debuting the trailer of a brand new game, Metal Gear Solid: Rising, at the Microsoft press conference. And with this apparent Xbox 360 coup, a thousand fanboys died inside as they trudged home for the night clutching their 24oz sodas.

The next day, Kojima turned up at the Sony event to reveal that – surprise! – not only was Rising on its way to PS3, but there was also another new Metal Gear game coming next year. A PlayStation exclusive this time, called Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker.

That's right, this MGS would just be for the PlayStation faithful and their PSPs. Wait, what? PSP? Frankly, by the time Kojima got on to announcing a coin-op arcade version of Metal Gear Online on day three, it was getting increasingly hard to know whether PlayStation gamers were getting the fuzzy end of the lollipop. But don't panic, PlayStation is

still getting the best of Metal Gear, and here's why.

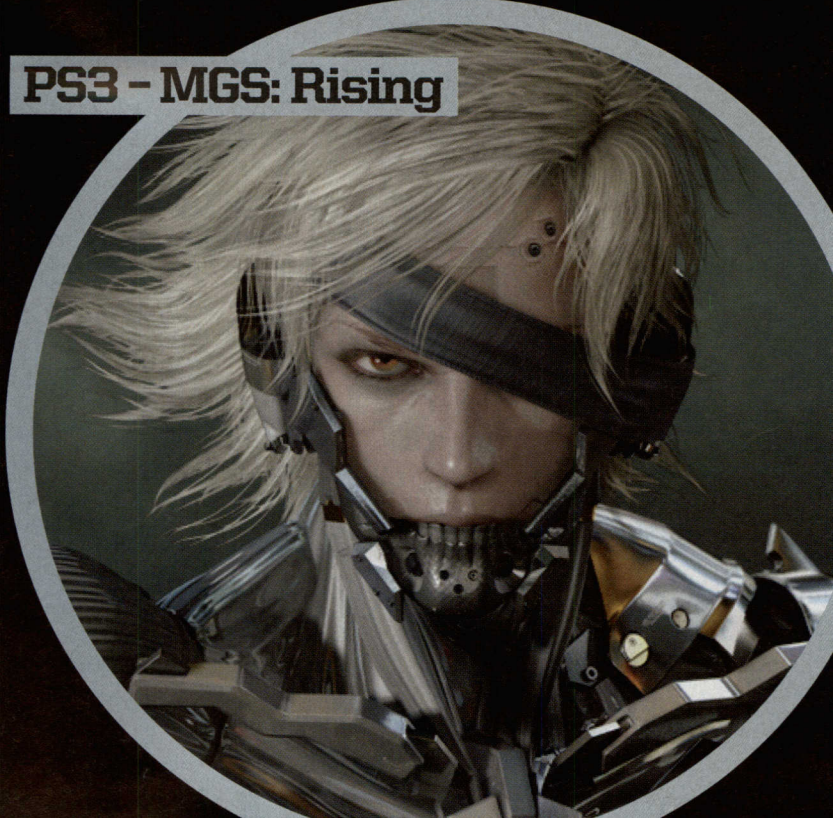
Gear shift

Allow us to cut through the crap and give you the facts. Rising, first. Custodians of the MGS canon can relax. Multi-format Metal Gear is not a true sequel to the saga, which ended with MGS4's implausible graveside WTF-a-thon. It is, however, going to deliver a new way of playing the series' trademark stealth gameplay. It's set to star Raiden,

MGS2's partially redeemed turkey of a hero, who appears in the excruciatingly fleeting teaser trailer in what appears to be an earlier, more armoured incarnation of his Guns Of The Patriots cyborg ninja outfit. This timeline hint is given further weight by an image shown briefly at Konami's event that depicted Raiden crouched on the back of Crying Wolf, MGS4's four-legged Beauty And The Beast boss character.

The trailer also cryptically flashes images of two Shinto gods – Fujin, ►

PS3 – MGS: Rising



Dev bio

Previously working on Policenauts and Zone Of The Enders, Hideo Kojima went on to create the Metal Gear Solid series. He is currently overseeing Konami's Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow (see p20).

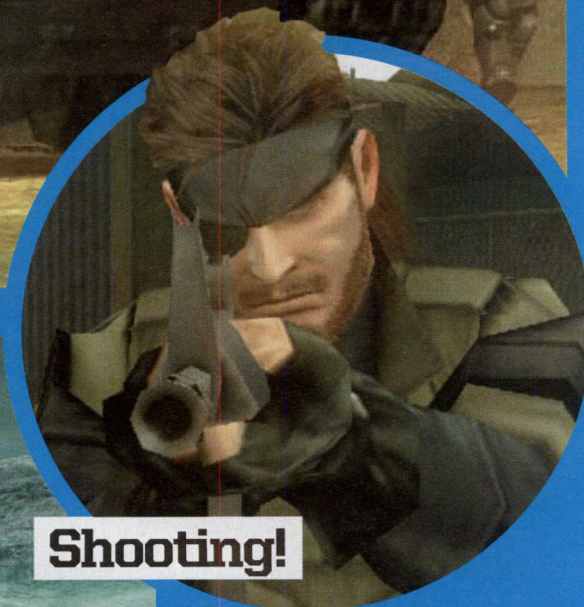


The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



While Portable Ops was more of a side story, Peace Walker is a direct sequel to MGS3: Snake Eater.



Shooting!



the god of wind, and Raijin, the god of thunder and lightning. Images that likely tie in with the weather-heavy pre-E3 site for Kojima Productions, and Rising's subtitle, which jettisons the long-standing 'Tactical Espionage Action' for 'Lightning Bolt Action'. "It's a completely different kind of action than what has appeared in the series so far," admits Kojima. Interestingly, he won't be directing it himself, saying "we're creating Rising with the up and

He said "no more" after MGS4, but Kojima can't help himself – he's writing, directing and producing Peace Walker.

coming Kojima Productions young bloods, because it is for the young bloods audience – a new Metal Gear experience". Still, he won't be stepping back too far: "I'll be working more deeply on the project than a normal producer."

Crucially, Kojima hints that Rising marks a new way of developing MGS games. What exactly that means is a mystery for now, but the action tag means this could be a third-person


brawler. Whether we're right or not, using Raiden and Rising as a test bed for the series is intriguing.

PSPeace Walker

Of the two games, Peace Walker is by far the more fleshed right now. Hardly surprising given its billing as 'The legendary missing link of the Metal Gear Saga'. Set in 1974 – ten years after the events of MGS3: Snake Eater, and four years after the events of the first rock-solid PSP outing, Portable Ops – Peace Walker is a direct sequel to Snake Eater, the chapter regarded by many as the series' high point. As such it stars Naked Snake, and looks likely to cover Snake's creation of Outer Heaven, the mercenary state that leads to the events of the first ever game in the




Stealth!



▲ Metal Gear Solid Peace Walker is set to stay true to the series' sneaky roots.



NEW PSP!
SEE P76
PlayStation



▲ The four Naked Snakes could signify a four-man co-op mode for Peace Walker.

"In short, Peace Walker is MGS5 in all but name."

series, 1987's Metal Gear. Despite the shift from console to handheld (albeit the rejuvenated PSPgo), Kojima is clearly throwing his all at the new game: "I'm doing the script, I'm doing all the game direction, and I'm also producing at the same time. And the main team from Metal Gear Solid 4 is working on this title." In short, this is MGS5 in all but name. The game's trailer sets the scene, showing Naked Snake training a private army in Colombia, prior to deploying in Costa

Rica to rescue it from an as yet unnamed occupying force.

There are three striking parts to the trailer. The first is a scene that shows Snake airlifting an unconscious enemy on the end of a weather balloon (an updated version of Portable Ops' squad recruitment dynamic, perhaps?). The second is a gigantic new mech with disc-like extremities that appears to hover above the ground. The third is a base infiltration carried out by *four* Naked

Snakes in slightly different uniforms, accompanied by the words 'Solitary infiltration? Tactical co-ordination?' We'll have to wait and see whether this marks a return for Portable Ops' squad-based Comrade System, or the new PSP-friendly playing system mentioned during the Peace Walker announcement. Either way, next year promises to be MGS's most revolutionary yet.

Listen to Kojima Productions' podcasts and wallow in all things MGS at snipurl.com/ju470.

Metal Gear Arcade

With Metal Gear Arcade, MGS4's brilliant multiplayer mode Metal Gear Online is getting the four-cabinet-cluster, coin-op treatment. But hold off persuading the family that Paignton should be your next holiday destination – for now, MGA is only destined for arcades in Japan. Pity, not least because with special specs Metal Gear Arcade will be playable in 3D.

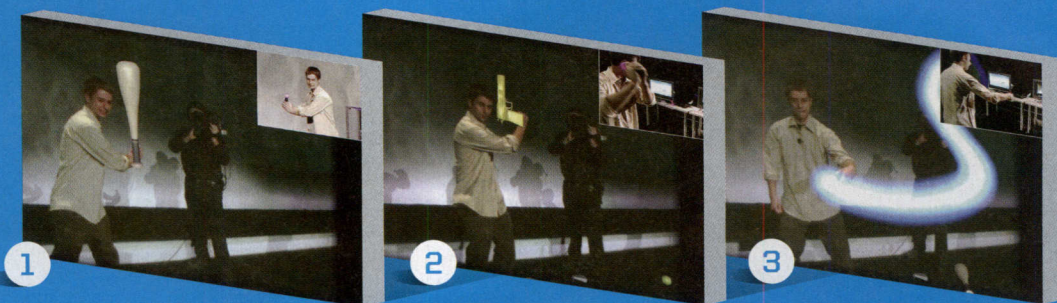


The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

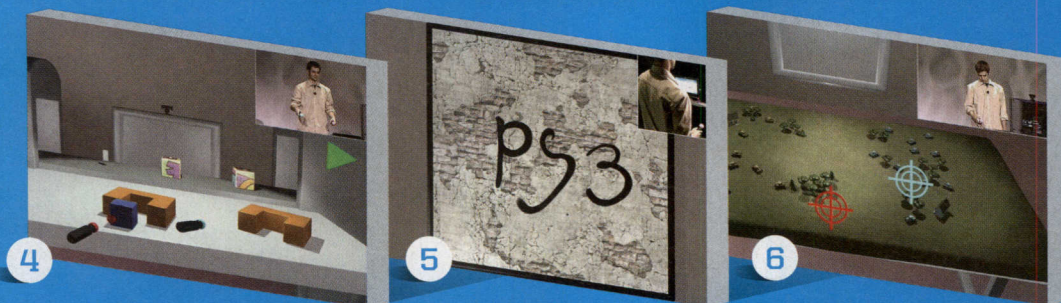
Fun!

This is the live camera feed from the PlayStation Eye that tracked the controller. It gives just a hint of the different applications for the technology. Bats and rackets for sports [1], guns for shooters [2] and glowing whips [3] for, um, Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Jedi?



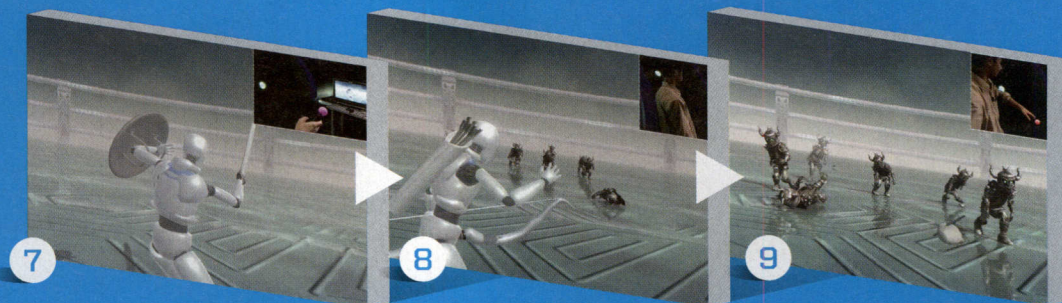
Accuracy!

Adding an extra controller will let you use both hands to pick up and manipulate objects, like building blocks [4]. The crazy accuracy also allows for writing and precise graffiti [5]. (Expect to see 'OPM woz ere!' all over Home.) Strategy games [6] can use the system for quick selection too.



Violence!

Sword-fighting and archery [7], the cornerstones of any good motion-control demo. The sword followed the tilt and twist of the controller exactly, allowing for a cheeky under-arm tickle for one of the armoured skeletons [8,9].



2 PS3's new motion-sensing controller

Peripheral will change the way you play games

Eye to eye

Sony has always been eager to try out new technology. PS3 brought us Sixaxis, but it all started in 1999 when Dr Richard Marks came up with the idea for the EyeToy camera. Even now, and despite the arrival of the new PlayStation Eye for PS3, EyeToy games are still in production for PS2.

You read that correctly: PS3 is getting a motion-sensing controller. And there's no point protesting. In fact, you might want to be pretty excited: Sony is serious about making this piece of kit appeal to the dedicated gamer.

The device currently looks like a remote control with a golf ball glued to one end, but Dr Richard Marks [who unveiled the controller at E3] says it's just a prototype. The PS Eye camera tracks the glowing ball, which changes colour to represent different functions. The first part of the live E3 demo showed a virtual room full of objects, and the controller in front of a flat-screen TV. The onscreen version imitated the real movements exactly,

Marks describing it as "true one-to-one tracking". It was used to perfectly mimic a baseball bat, a sword, a mace, a fan, a flashlight and finally, our favourite, a golden Desert Eagle. We also saw how it writes and draws with "sub-millimetre accuracy".

Double trouble

The demo then introduced a second controller, and the two devices were used like hands to pick up building blocks. "It may look simple," says Marks, "but it's one of the hardest things to do precisely."

SCEA President Jack Tretton is confident the new motion-control tech will be a big step up from what's

currently available. "It's very difficult for me to perceive God Of War III being played with the Wii controller," he explains. "It's a different experience that doesn't lend itself to certain types of games. I think our controller can be used with every game that's on the system now and every game we're working on." That means you'll be able to select units in strategy games by just circling them. There's even scope for dodging bullets in Killzone 3 or drawing your LittleBigPlanet level. See: told you it was exciting.

Not convinced? Watch the demo at the E3 Sony conference for yourself at snipurl.com/jhle6.

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



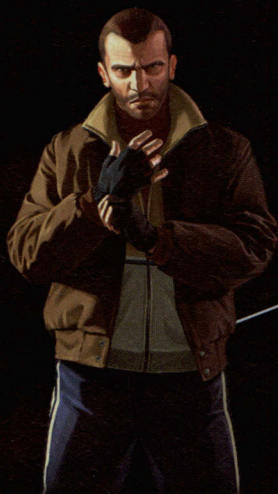
All The President's Men

Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford star as investigative journalists Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, the snooping pair who uncovered the full extent of the Watergate scandal that kick-started the '70s' atmosphere of distrust. If Agent doesn't feature Deep Throat-style informants, we'll be disappointed.



The Bourne Trilogy

The spiritual successor to the wave of '70s spy movies, Bourne is an intelligent, thinking-man's thriller, but unlike the older films it also has a strong line in spectacular action. From what Rockstar boss Dan Houser has been saying, expect Agent to similarly combine the two.



Grand Theft Auto IV

Not only does GTA prove Rockstar North is peerless when it comes to filtering cinematic classics into incredible new narratives, but it also shows that the tech already exists to make a living, breathing city for Agent's cloak-and-dagger plot to play out in.

AGENT

The Conversation

Francis Ford Coppola's haunting espionage thriller. Gene Hackman is Harry Caul, who slips into moral despair when he suspects that his work has triggered a murder. We expect Agent to be full of the film's bulky analogue wiretapping gear and desperate loneliness.



Three Days Of The Condor

Redford again, this time as a bookish CIA researcher whose office is liquidated – in the bad, people made dead, sense – while he's at lunch, forcing him to go on the run. The restrained but super-tense series of shadowy meetings and getaways strikes just the sort of tone Agent needs.



3

Rockstar's secret Agent uncovered

PS3 exclusive is the game of our paranoid dreams

What price exclusivity?

In order to secure the exclusive rights to GTA IV DLC, Microsoft reportedly shelled out \$50 million to Rockstar. No such deal has been reported for Agent's PS3 agreement. Instead, president of publisher Take Two, Ben Feder, has explained that the decision to go with Sony was made because "exclusivity does work" when launching a new franchise. Hooray! He also said, "It's the Houser Brothers and Rockstar North. It's the A team working on an AAA title," which reminded us how excited we are.

One of E3's most exciting revelations was also one of its shortest: SCEA boss Jack Tretton off-handedly dropping the bombshell that Rockstar is developing a new PS3 exclusive, made during a ten-second gap between other announcements.

While it was brief, the news sent everyone wild – the conference crowd, the internet and, most of all, us. Because not only does Rockstar have an incredible track record, but the team developing this new game, Agent, is Rockstar North – the A-list studio behind GTA IV. Details are thin but what we know sounds *really*

interesting, with Rockstar calling it a 'paranoid journey into the world of counter-intelligence, espionage and political assassinations during the height of the Cold War at the end of the 1970s'.

The spying game

Rockstar's best games draw on iconic cinema – Scorsese and Coppola's mafia films in GTA, or Sergio Leone's Westerns in the tone of Red Dead. To us, the description of Agent speaks to a world of shadowy post-Watergate thrillers, the golden age of paranoid drama in '70s Hollywood that threw

up cynical classics such as Conversation, Three Days Of The Condor and All The President's Men. Expect shadowy photography, haunting loneliness and a heavy atmosphere of mistrust.

But also expect plenty of excitement. Rockstar boss Dan Houser says he believes Agent will be "the ultimate action game", raising the possibility of more Jason Bourne-style car chases and gun fights mixed in with all the sadness. Holy gods, we're excited.

Agent has no confirmed release date, but to keep up to speed with news and events go to rockstargames.com.

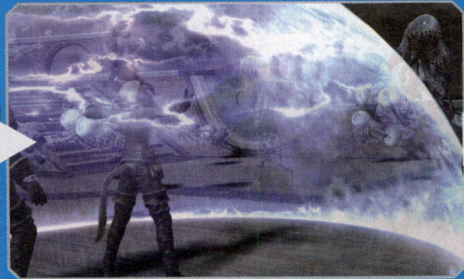


The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



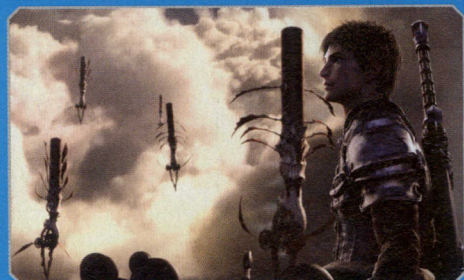
▲ It all starts on a boat, with some fast and furious combat...



▲ The lady with the tail creates a force field to fend off attacks...



▲ A terrifying sea monster leaps out of the water...



▲ The action then switches to some pretty Freudian airships...



▲ ...for a massive, dragon-filled battle. Our hero's ship flies on....



▲ ...past more airships, explosions, and a floating island.



▲ It all ends in flames as a dragon fireball finds its target...



▲ Enter this Zac Efron look-a-like. "Get 'cha head in the game..."



▲ The trailer ends on majestic scenery and a chocobo's rump.

4

Final Fantasy XIV!

New Square Enix MMO coming exclusively to PS3

Worldwide quest

Square Enix's first online Final Fantasy was way back in 2002 (2004 for North America, The 12th Of Never for Europe) with FFXI. As well as all the usual RPG questing, it enables players to team up, fight monsters and roam the land of Vana'diel together. You can take on different jobs and even do a little chocobo breeding in your spare time. In April, Square Enix announced the number of players had hit the two million mark.

Japanese developer Square Enix managed to deliver one of the biggest shocks of E3, with a two-for-one deal on Final Fantasy announcements. We all expected another look at FFXIII, but out of nowhere SCEA President Jack Tretton announced Final Fantasy XIV to a stunned conference audience.

That's right, XIV, before Final Fantasy XIII has even been released. It's an MMO (a massively multiplayer online) game with a medieval fantasy setting that's a clear departure from FFXIII's new modern aesthetic. The news emerged alongside footage which shows a gang of fighters battling monsters on land, at sea on a giant galleon and aboard strange

organic-looking airships. Welcome to the land of Eorzea, where dragons roam, sea monsters lurk and your hair can never be too floppy. Cast members revealed so far are three warriors and the old FF stereotype – sorry, favourite – a chocobo.

Surprise surprise

That's all Square is giving us for now, but it does promise that the game adapts to your needs – whether you like to do your monster-slaying with friends, or human contact repulses you even in a virtual world. And while the developer won't say if the combat is turn-based or live action, it reckons fans of Final Fantasy XI (the series'

first online game) will find the wide array of character classes on offer reassuringly familiar.

European fans were left in the lurch when plans to release the PS2 version of Final Fantasy XI in PAL territories were scrapped. This time it's definitely coming out here, and with the online capabilities of PS3, FFXIV could become PS3's World Of Warcraft. It's possible that we're even more excited about summoning and slaying together online than we are about the unreleased, single-player Final Fantasy XIII. See you online. Just don't expect us to show any mercy...

Final Fantasy XIV will be out in 2010 – you can see the full trailer at eu.finalfantasyxiv.com.

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



Top Gear

Gran Turismo on PSP will feature 800 cars, including dream drives like the Spec V6TR and the Ferrari Enzo. There will be 35 tracks on offer (with 60 possible layouts) and four-man multiplayer.



5

"I don't think there are any competitors"

Why Gran Turismo's Kazunori Yamauchi fears no rival

Driving force

Before he became famous for creating Gran Turismo, Kazunori Yamauchi's first game was Motor Toon Grand Prix, a cartoonish PS1 racer that was only ever released in Japan. You can see it for yourself at snipurl.com/jwvcs or pick up the sequel Motor Toon Grand Prix 2 for PS2 on Ebay for the bargain price of £4.

We've been waiting for Gran Turismo 5 for years, so we're a little surprised when we sit down with Polyphony Digital's CEO Kazunori Yamauchi. "We could put it out at any time," he tells us. All that's holding it back is the perfectionist standards the series is known for. "There's always something to polish."

Yamauchi confirms there are new cars and new WRC and NASCAR licences, and if the trailer we saw is anything to go by, the game will look sweeter than Megan Fox dipped in sugar. But he won't say any more about the PS3 version today. He's here with OPM to talk about GT on PSP. It has been in production since

2004, so our first question *has* to be: why the delay?

Bumpy ride

"There were a lot of obstacles," explains Yamauchi. "The small screen, the lesser CPU power, the lower graphics processing power, and the small amount of memory." The team also studied the competition. "There's not a single one that lives up to Gran Turismo quality. We had to work very hard to get it to that level." So there's no one out there who can challenge Gran Turismo right now? "I don't think there are any competitors."

Yamauchi isn't boasting. His team

has worked hard to make sure this isn't just another PSP port: "A lot of companies, when they make a PSP version of a game, license the development out to another company. There were times when 100% of our efforts were on the PSP." And it shows – the game looks better than anything else PSP has been home to so far. There won't be any DLC but Yamauchi did leave us with one final piece of tantalising information: "We're actually thinking about making the PSP garage compatible with the PS3 garage." Gran Turismo on PSP will be out in October.

He's not *always* creating racing games – Yamauchi has also been designing cars. Turn to p28 to read all about it.



■ Straightforward deathmatches see heroes fighting villains to get the most kills.

6

Helping Nathan Drake online

Our verdict on Uncharted 2's multiplayer beta

Works in progress

While betas are a great way for gamers to get an early taste of an upcoming game, they're really for the developer to test things out. Within days of Uncharted 2's beta going live, Naughty Dog was already patching it. Issues that came to light included grenades not inflicting damage properly, long waits during matchmaking and collision detection bugs.

Drake's cautious cover-based combat doesn't seem like the obvious choice for a multiplayer makeover. But, after testing out the beta, we can tell you it works. Our time spent in Uncharted 2: Among Thieves' online

adjust to the pace and it's just as exciting as any online shooter.

Naked Drake

The nearest gameplay comparison is MGS Online – albeit a looser, more

“Walls explode under a hail of gunfire”

beta was filled with adventure and brilliant shootouts – dashing across open ground and snapping to walls as they explode under a hail of gunfire that captures the Uncharted ‘feel’ perfectly. Even if the mercs all sound like shouty American teens and call you “a douche” in the lobby. There's a tactical feel to the action as you dart from pillar to post, but

mobile version. The ability to lock on to cover or make diving rolls across open ground means it's similar, but faster. There's no radar, though, so you need to stay on your toes.

Visually, it looks amazing, packing in all the detail and vibrant colour of the offline game. The animation is also super hot, as characters clamber over walls or hurl themselves into the

air to reach platforms. One thing that's not quite right yet is the climbing. It's not always clear where you can clamber: ladders stick out a mile, obviously, as do most ledges, but the logic's inconsistent. We encountered several identical electrical junction boxes, for example, but only some were climbable.

There are three match types in the beta: Deathmatch, Co-op and Plunder. Co-op is the most fun and sees three of you playing as Drake, new girl Chloe and returning sidekick Sully, working together to recover treasure. It feels a lot like the main game, with cut-scenes and puzzles as you battle mercs through a war-torn town. Teamwork is important – at one point a character has to be boosted up a lamp-post, scramble across a wall and enter a ruined building to tip a bookshelf out of the window for the

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



▲ Climbing's a great way to gain an advantage from high ground, but it leaves you horribly exposed.



■ Grenades are just as useful to clear some space as they are to kill people.



others to use as a ladder. The combat's tough, though, with waves of enemies attacking from all sides and forcing you to stick together – especially as your buddies can revive you if you're downed.

Deathmatch, on the other hand, is the usual head-to-head competition, while Plunder has you fighting to secure a big gold idol. It's basically Capture The Flag... but with a *really* heavy flag. Whoever has it can barely move, so teams need to work together to protect the idol carrier.

You can also throw it short distances, passing it around like a 24-Karat basketball. It's great.

Scoring in Plunder – and killing enemies – earns cash, which levels you up and unlocks new abilities that can be assigned to two Booster slots. These increase things like accuracy, the amount of bullets gained from ammo or the number of rounds per clip. Weapons range from the familiar AKs to a huge Portable Gatling Gun and RPGs. You can also grab a riot shield: it slows you down and restricts you to only using a pistol, but it's great for a frontal assault.

One interesting option that appears on the menu but isn't live yet is the Cinema, which will apparently enable you to watch recorded games. It'll be great for reliving classic matches, although seeing multiple Drakes running around could get weird. Funny how no one picks the girl...

Want to share your opinion on the Uncharted 2 beta? Let us know what you think at opm@futurenet.com.

7 PS3 meets phone

Access your console on the go with Aino

There have been rumours of a PlayStation phone for many a year, and the new Sony Ericsson Aino could be the culprit. On the surface, it's an ordinary mobile with a fancy camera and touchscreen, but its Remote Play function can be used to hook up with your PS3. As long as you're in an area with a wireless or 3G connection, you'll be able to access the media sat at home on your PS3's hard drive, like music, video and photos. It even links to PlayTV, so you can watch your favourite programmes when you're on the bus. You'll be able to show friends/relatives/random annoyed strangers your pictures from Thorpe Park, listen to your tunes, and set The Hills to record... everything except play actual PlayStation games.

Phone Home

So sneaking away for a bit of Fat Princess in the office toilets is still a beautiful dream, but Sony Ericsson's marketing manager Alexandre Cardon says the Aino "gives a taste of our vision of the future". If this merging of Sony's two major brands goes well, it'll hopefully lead to more PS3-friendly phones soon.

The phone also packs in an impressive 8.1 Megapixel camera, an MP3 player, video recording for those all important post pub videos and a 'stroke me, stroke me' touchscreen. It's due for release over here at the end of the year, and we're already in the queue to have a hands-on as soon as it arrives.

Check it out and set off your gadget glands at snipurl.com/kacwl.



■ Knight vs ogre. It's all fun and games... until someone loses an eye.

8

Can Kojima save Castlevania?

Mr Metal Gear tasked with rescuing classic series



Blood lines

The Castlevania series is best known for its vampiric theme. Originally a 2D side-scroller, Castlevania: Legacy Of Darkness for the N64 was the first third-person version. How Lords Of Shadow's plot will fit into the story is unknown, but we'd bet our cape a Dracula boss is on the way.

A month ago you'd have been forgiven for writing off Konami's action game Lords Of Shadow without a second thought. A brand new IP featuring monsters, magic and – we presumed – meh, it seemed like a non-entity. In the space of one E3 press conference, all that changed.

With no prior warning, Konami unleashed two huge revelations about its new slasher. Not only was it going to be part of the classic Castlevania series (cue the dramatic name change to, um, Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow), but gaming deity Hideo Kojima, lord of all things Metal Gear Solid, would be overseeing development. Does he never sleep? It's still being produced by Mercury

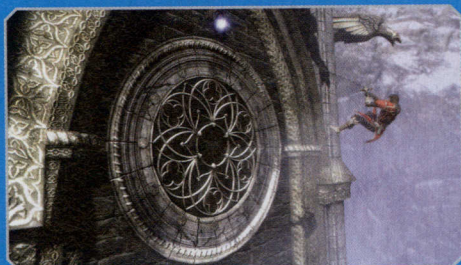
Steam, but Kojima Productions will be collaborating closely on the project.

Mr Whippy

Lords Of Shadow follows Scottish warrior Gabriel as he takes his wife's murder out on the local werewolves and ogres while scouring medieval Europe for a mask that can bring back the dead. It's celeb-packed, with Robert Carlyle and Patrick Stewart just two of the huge names lending their voices to the title. As well as bearing the Vampire Killer (a chain whip that's a hallmark of the Castlevania series), Gabriel can use his Combat Cross to stab and club unfortunate enemies into oblivion. No swords, then? Oh.

Perhaps inevitably, Kojima's new role met with a mixed reaction from diehards at the Castlevania Dungeon forum (snipurl.com/k895y). Some were modestly pleased ("Shelving what has come before is a good thing, in some regards." – The Silverlord), but others expressed concern about Lord Of Shadows' apparent identity theft. Like CastlevaniaLord58: "I'm gonna be upset if this is not Castlevania, and instead some game that stole the title and threw in a whip-wielding hero." Which, in fairness, is *exactly* what this sounds like. Still, tradition or Kojima? For us, the latter every time.

Need to bone up on your retro knowledge? Play a flash version of the original Castlevania at snipurl.com/jrg35.



■ Gabriel's whip is for more than just combat and bondage.



■ Gabriel is a holy knight, sworn to protect innocents from evil.



■ The game was always (secretly) part of the Castlevania series.

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



The video player

Just like youtube, the default playback size is small, but hitting stretches to full screen. The resolution's still okay.

The advertising

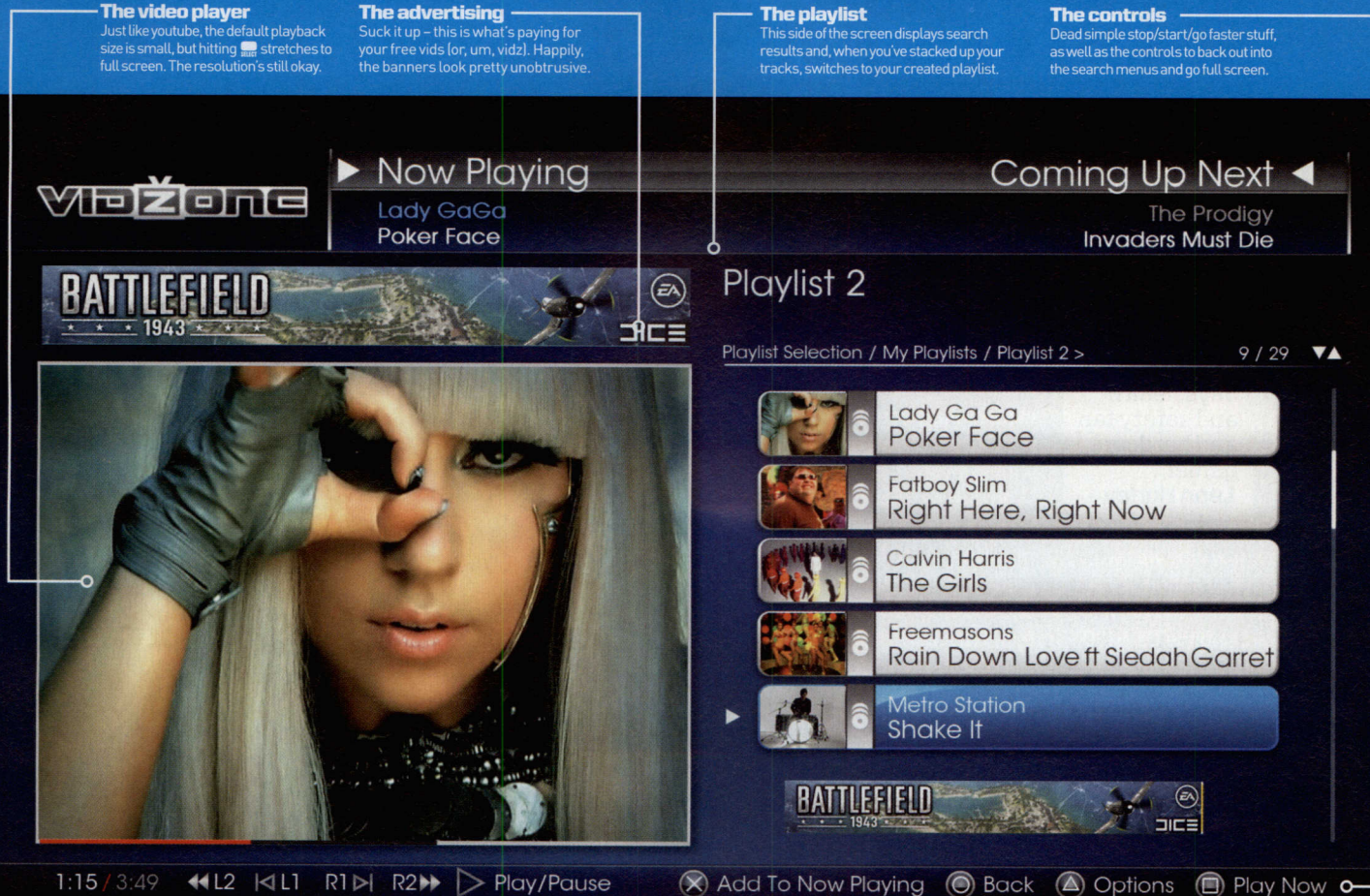
Suck it up – this is what's paying for your free vids (or, um, vidz). Happily, the banners look pretty unobtrusive.

The playlist

This side of the screen displays search results and, when you've stacked up your tracks, switches to your created playlist.

The controls

Dead simple stop/start/go faster stuff, as well as the controls to back out into the search menus and go full screen.



VidZone lands at last

It's like MTV, only free – and *you* choose what's on

Tone deaf

VidZone is happy to show you videos for free, but if you want to actually keep any of them you'll have to cough up. Click on the download option during video streaming and you'll be able to buy ring tones and mobile phone-sized videos of each track for £1.50 each. We'll pass.

VidZone is here! Apart from having a name like a video rental shop from the '80s, what is there to tell? Loads. It's a free music streaming service that was originally aimed at web and mobile phone customers, and is now available for free download from the PlayStation Store. Once installed you'll find it under the 'music' section of your PS3's XMB.

Snapped up

We were fans from the moment a pre-release version arrived in the office in mid-June. The service has licence agreements with Universal, Sony, Warner, EMI and several

independent labels which, though not comprehensive, do give you access to the likes of Dizzee Rascal, The Ting Tings, Foo Fighters, Bob Dylan and tons more. Older, less commercial stuff is harder to come by (No Sleeper or Echobelly = boo!) but with over 10,000 videos available you'd have to be super picky to hate *everything*. The system is dead easy to use, and is essentially based on the intuitive design of youtube: you can search the database by artist or genre using a (slightly clunky) letter input to narrow your selection, before browsing individual bands and videos. You then either add your choices to a playlist by

hitting (we made a themed set called Sighing Summer featuring Camera Obscura and Glasvegas, then stared out the window all afternoon) or just start them immediately.

The videos cue up quickly and play smoothly, even on our not-amazing net connection. And other than some occasional blockiness, picture quality is excellent – although the inset view is inevitably superior to full-screen. All good news, basically. Just try to finish reading the mag before you rush off to repeat viewings of Eric Prydz' gym gyrate-a-thon. Please?

VidZone is available now and will be regularly updated with new content. See vidzone.tv for more.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

10 Is the skateboard peripheral a good idea?

OPM writers thrash it out over Tony Hawk's new gimmick



No

Says health and safety fan and hardcore gamer, **Leon Hurley**

I don't even know why we're having this conversation. It's a plastic board you stand on. It's clearly stupid, and the US \$120 price will probably translate to about 80 quid, so it's not exactly entry-level idiocy. If I wanted to get that close to the sport I'd learn to ride an actual board. But I don't. I want to sit in a chair and *pretend* – pressing buttons to try something that would break me like dry pasta under a hammer if I tried it for real.

And no, you can't compare it to Guitar Hero. You can play that sitting down, and you're just

pressing buttons. The plastic guitar is genius, but it's nothing like a *real* guitar. This? This is clearly skateboarding without wheels which, like flying without wings, involves falling.

Just think about the logistics of making fast, jerky movements, balanced on a piece of plastic that you occasionally have to grab at to pull tricks. Come release, the resulting accident-filled carnage will make the few TVs broken by a loose Wii-mote seem like nothing. The world will resonate to the sound of crushed fingers and the dong of skulls bouncing gently on carpets. And when it does, I shall be happily playing Skate. Sitting down, with zero chance of a fractured spine.

Think the Hawk's peripheral is an accident waiting to happen? Text Ride No to 87474.



Yes

Says our extreme but unstable editor-in-chief, **Tim Clark**

Is Tony's little plastic skateboard a good idea? Well that depends. If you're Activision, and you want to make enough money to buy the moon, then yeah. But if you're the kind of elitist gamer who sneers at anyone who can't speed-run MGS4 in under an hour then maybe not so much. And if that sounds like you, then I've got some more bad news: The Wii Fit owners inherited the Earth. The. War. Is. Over.

We now live in a post-Guitar Hero world, and I for one will be embracing our new casual gaming overlords. Here's three

reasons why the board rocks: 1) Anything that gets more people – specifically, girls – into games is good news. 2) Tony Hawk's has been stagnating for years. It needs radical change. 3) Adding an actual skateboard to a game about skateboarding is hardly going to make it *more* boring.

Despite this Spock-style logic, my colleagues, most of whom don't even play Hawk's, remain dismissive of the board. Well, guess what? I couldn't care less about grinding out infinite trick combos on a DualShock. I can, however, see the appeal of a bunch of drunks trying to do ollies at a house party. (In my mind I see Leon crashing through a coffee table, in slow motion, on a loop, forever.) You want one now, right?

Can't wait to get your feet on what could be the next big thing? Text Ride Yes to 87474.

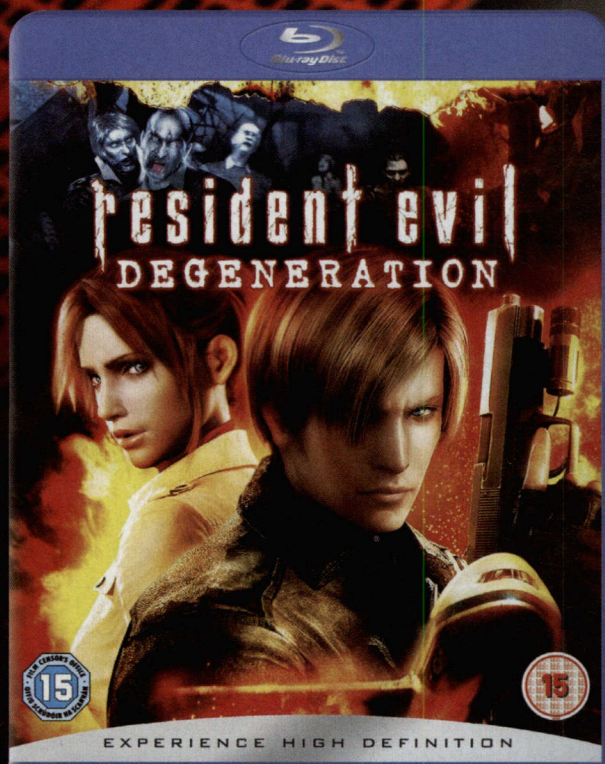


All aboard

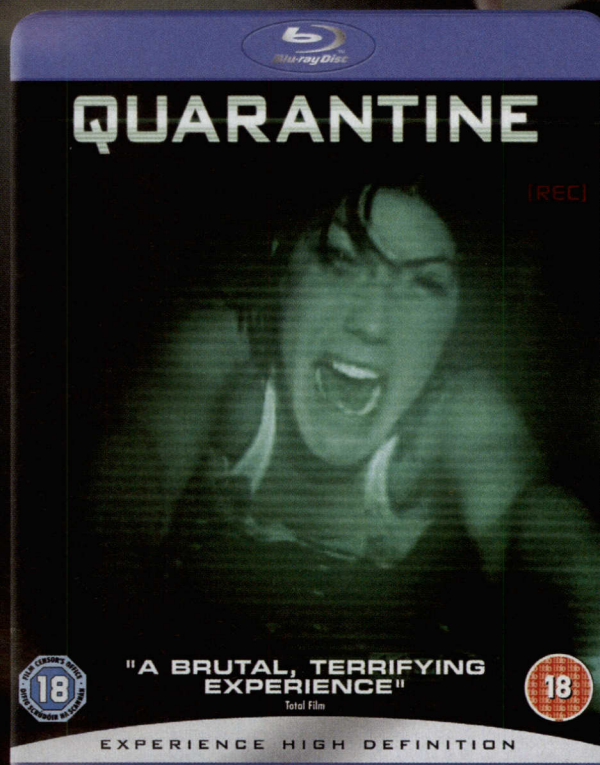
Tony Hawk's Ride board is, in theory, safe. Staying on the ground at all times (thank God), it uses motion sensors to measure speed, tilt and angle, enabling you to perform ollies, kick flips and manuals. The clever part is that the moves you need to make mirror what you'd have to do in real life – even physically holding onto the board to perform grabs. So, theoretically, the better you are at real skating, the better you'll be at the game. Which in our case will be rubbish.

Subscribe

And we'll send you Resident Evil:
Degeneration & Quarantine on Blu-ray!



As well as featuring 1080p Full HD, both of these Blu-rays are packed with extras, including BD-Live-compatible exclusive content.*



How to subscribe

1

ONLINE

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/pom/p034

2

TELEPHONE

0844 848 2852 quoting reference P034

Overseas - myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/POM

Why subscribe?

- You'll save 25% off the cover price and pay only £14.60 every three months...
- ...plus we'll send you Resident Evil: Degeneration & Quarantine on Blu-ray!*
- Every issue and Blu-ray disc is delivered free of charge, straight to your door!

Offer for UK Direct Debit subscribers only. You will receive 13 issues per year. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Minimum subscription term is 12 months. *The gifts are subject to availability. In the unlikely event of stocks becoming exhausted, we reserve the right to substitute with items of similar value. If at any time during the first 60 days you are dissatisfied in any way, please notify us in writing and we will refund you for all un-mailed issues. Closing date: 4 August 2008. Order Ref: P034.

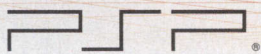
summerofpsp.com

YOUR MONSTERS. YOUR BATTLES. YOUR FIRE BREATHING SPECIAL EDITION PSP.™

YOUR WHOLE WORLD IN YOUR HANDS

Hunt down majestic monsters in the social gaming phenomenon that has taken Japan by storm. Armed with your special edition Mystic Silver PSP, collect and create an array of weapons and armour to take down fierce beasts. Embark on hunts alone or as a team in up to 4 player Ad-Hoc mode to complete more challenging quests. Remember, in Monster Hunter you are never alone.

Visit summerofpsp.com, and play the Monster Hunter mini game, for your chance to win a fantastic holiday for you and your family, as well as loads of other prizes.



PlayStation®Portable



Informer

Agenda

PlayStation news,
views, happenings
and people...

26 **Informer**

Hot game issues
investigated by
OPM's crack team.

28 **Culture**

The PlayStation
people who make
gaming great.

30 **Personal**

Hot opinion from
those in the know.

31 **Tech**

Shiny things you
can't live without.

32 **Sony**

New kit beamed
down from the
Sony mothership.

34 **Events**

Your gamer's
guide to the
month ahead.



Big in Japan

Why Japan is mental for Monster Hunter

Hunting for fun

Eat, play and party in Japan... Monster Hunter-style



Food Cafes in districts like Tokyo's Akihabara often conjure up the food your character devours on real-world tables. This custom peaked during the recent fifth anniversary Monster Hunter celebrations, when pixel-perfect recreations of in-game nosh appeared.



Festivals Last year, five major Japanese cities held Monster Hunter festivals. "We do competitions on the fastest hunting times," explains producer Ryozyo Tsujimoto. "We also open Monster Hunter art exhibitions, shops, R&D demonstrations, other fun shows..."



Concerts Every spring an annual classical concert plays Monster Hunter music to an audience of kids, older players and music-lovers. It isn't all orchestral instruments either – Middle-Eastern guitars, Greek lutes and world music all star. And you can play Monster Hunter in the interval!

In Japan they don't call it a PSP, they call it a Monster Hunter Machine. That's one indication of how colossal Capcom's co-op beast-slaying adventure is in the land of the rising sun. Before the release of Monster Hunter Portable 2nd G in February 2007 Sony had shifted a relatively modest 4.75 million PSPs in their home country. Once Capcom's fantasy wildlife slaying game appeared, this number *doubled* in little more than a year. Japan's PSP count clocked in at 9.3 million last June, and currently stands at well over ten million.

Noobs allowed

So what is it about Monster Hunter that has the average Japanese gamer ploughing two or three hours into it a day? "Well, in competitive games, like fighting games, the fun part is in the effort to outdo your opponent," explains Capcom producer Ryozyo Tsujimoto. "However, in co-op multiplayer the fun is in 'being useful' for the others and how to contribute to the group to get results," underlining the Monster Hunter message that when attempting to harvest the guts of a rampaging beast *everyone* is a key player – from the elite hunt junkies, to outright beginners. Japanese gamers appear to agree. After releases on PC and PS2, the game only truly became a phenomenon on PSP – when Monster Hunter wasn't locked to a household. Now, everywhere you go, little clusters of people can be seen, questing together – kids on the way to school, office workers in lunch breaks, even the occasional impromptu gathering on a street corner. "There are

very wide demographics, from students to business people in both genders," adds Tsujimoto-san. "I also heard about a lady in her 50s playing..."

Tag team

Alvin Chua, curator of Japanese popular culture blog alafista.com, also points to Monster Hunter's teamwork ethic as a reason for its success. "People who play online and linked up get better rewards and level-up faster than just playing it alone. Another thing is that most Japanese people don't own a PC – they generally use cellphones to surf the internet. Far more teenagers have a handheld machine." The manager of O-café, a comic store and Monster Hunter hangout in Kagawa in southern Japan, underlines this: "Teamwork is vital – you can't beat a monster alone, it's only possible to conquer it together."

With great commercial success comes merchandise, and lots of it. Figurines, art books, aprons, credit cards, even a special PSP grip... over 120 different types at the last count. "Capcom released a Monster Hunter Drink," says Chua, "and even its bottle cap had different icons to please the hardcore collectors."

With the UK release of the second PSP game, laboured with the tag Monster Hunter Freedom Unite, Capcom and Sony are hoping to encourage a similar passion for monster-hunting on our shores. Whether we get businessmen furiously laying traps to ensnare gigantic bat creatures on their daily commute is, frankly, doubtful. But you never know.

RUMOUR MACHINE

Insider whispers

EA is planning a youtube-style video portal where gamers can upload footage and follow friends.



Reports that the next Smackdown game will use the UFC 2009: Undisputed engine are, sadly, false.



A UK developer is currently hard at work on a shiny new shooter, using an updated version of the Black engine.

A script for a film version of the Driver game is in the works.

Unreal Tournament dev Epic is getting spooky with a new horror game for PS3.



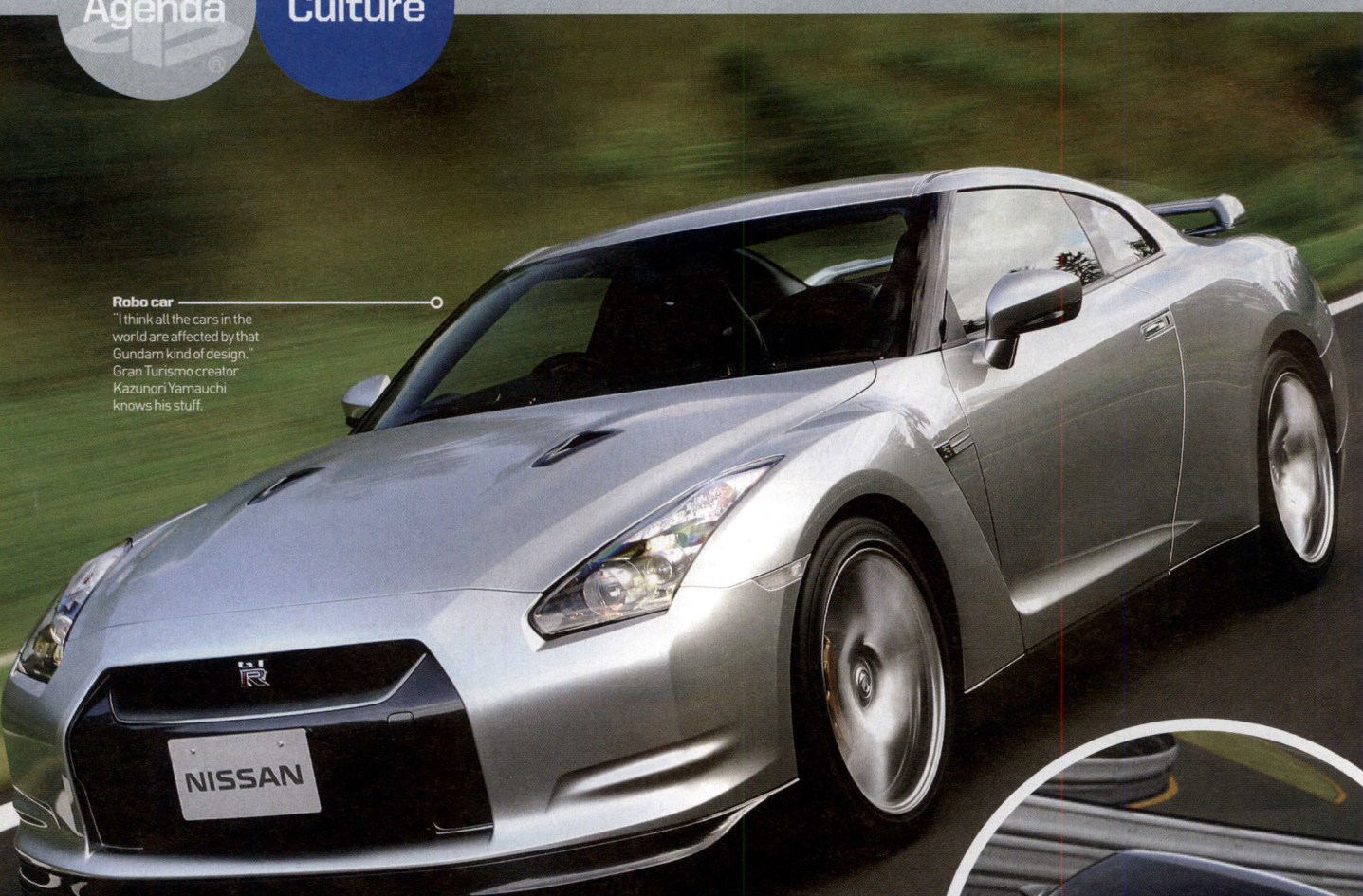
Killer 7's Grasshopper Manufacture has a new project with Square Enix.

When developer Factor 5 (of dragon disaster Lair) closed, it was working on a PS3-exclusive sci-fi title known only as Project C.



Robo car

"I think all the cars in the world are affected by that Gundam kind of design." Gran Turismo creator Kazunori Yamauchi knows his stuff.



028

Gran Turismo gets *real*...

The car that games built

No wonder Gran Turismo 5 is taking so long – Polyphony Digital has been a little distracted. It seems the Japanese developer has turned its attentions to *real* cars. That's right, the new Nissan GT-R is more than just a fantasy – Polyphony Digital played a part in actually designing the car, which went on sale in the UK in March. And with a top speed of 195mph, you'll need a gentle foot if you're going to avoid accidentally speeding too far past the KFC drive-thru window.

The GT-R's distinctive heads-up display shows typical Polyphony Digital amounts of attention to detail. It monitors everything from lateral G-force to the temperature of the coolant sloshing around the engine. Even its shape has been inspired by videogames: "The GT-R is a total muscle car," says Nissan's chief creative officer Shiro Nakamura. "It's completely unusual in Europe, very manga-like and mechanical, like Gundam." And who doesn't want a car that looks like a great big robot? We've already started saving up the £52,900 we're going to need to buy this baby as our little runaround. At this rate we'll be able to afford one in 2210.

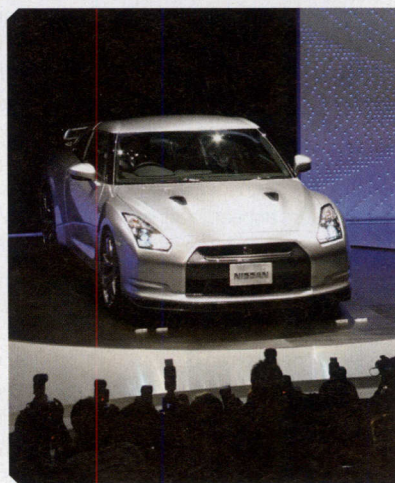


► Spot the difference. Gran Turismo's in-game render of the Nissan GT-R.

Kaz: "It's the best"

GT man ♥ Nissan

Polyphony Digital's CEO Kazunori Yamauchi told us what he thought of the technology he contributed to the Nissan GT-R. "Out of all the monitors equipped in cars these days, I think it's one of the best." Nissan was obviously pleased with the work too – Yamauchi got his own GT-R for his trouble.





Art attack

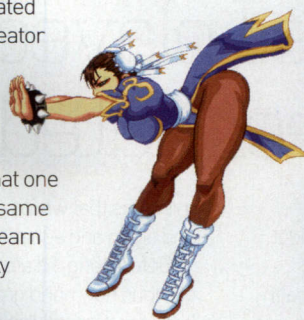
Street Fighter-themed gallery knocks us out

Forget the Mona Lisa. And dissected sharks. Even the Sagrada Familia. The only art we want adorning the walls of our gadget-filled bachelor pads is Hadouken-themed.

Nucleus, a small gallery in Alhambra, California, recently became home to over 50 pieces of Street Fighter-themed artwork for a tribute exhibition titled Jab Strong Fierce. There are paintings, sculptures and even a fireball made of fabric. See the whole collection, and maybe snap up something for yourself, at snipurl.com/ihccz.

"Street Fighter was one of the first franchises to experiment with different artistic styles – from SF2, to Alpha, to EX, to Puzzle Fighter – which I appreciated as an artist," explains collection creator Bobby Chiu. He thinks his two passions have become closely linked: "Not only do games and art inspire each other, the line between them will blur so much that one day, they'll become practically the same thing." In that case, we're going to learn to draw: the above work is currently selling for a mighty \$1,900 (£1,200).

▲ Chun Li teases us with a flash of thigh. Distressingly, Blanka does the same.



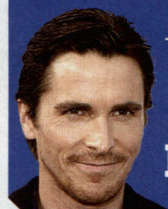
WHO SAID THAT?

VIP quotes

"The smartest and dumbest thing I ever did was sell my company to EA." **Steven Spielberg** lets it all out.



"I do love videogames." And they love you shouty **Christian Bale!**



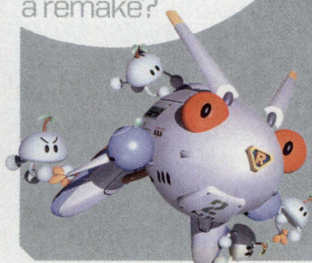
"I've things in the works. Hint? One word: Bioshock." **Wentworth Miller** is starring in it... or playing it.



"They couldn't have paid us enough to give it the time and attention required to make it as funny as a film." **Harold Ramis** slates his own 'Busters game.

OPM HOT TOPIC

What PlayStation game deserves a remake?



Patrick Fortier
Creative director,
A2M

"Jumping Flash! It was an epic sized platformer. The feeling of height was incredible and you really got a rush from making those long triple-jumps."



Richard Jones
Lead games designer,
Rebellion

"Shadow Of The Colossus. It pushed PS2 to breaking point. I'd love to see what the team could do if they were allowed to stretch their legs with PS3."



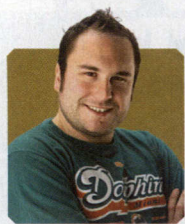
Nick Baynes
Game director,
Black Rock

"Parappa The Rapper. After pioneering firsts like introducing queuing for the toilet as a gameplay mechanic, think what he could bring to games now."



Jonathan Smith
Development director,
TT Games

"Little Big Adventure deserves a remake – it was just a beautiful, charming and wonderfully rich masterpiece from Adeline Software."



All wormed out

Why Ben Wilson was forced to stop playing PSN with his wife

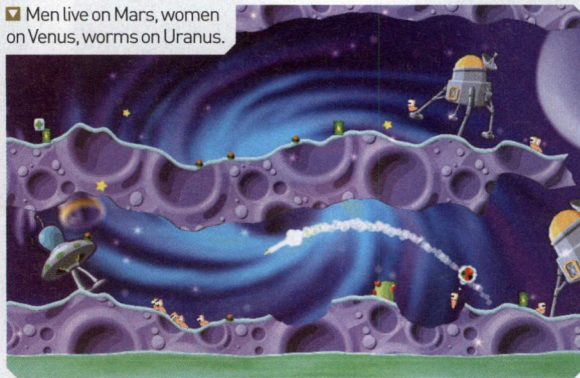
I missed the whole Worms fad in the mid-'90s. While all my schoolmates were banging on about the hilarity of naming their teams of spineless wonders after Manchester United (which seemed pretty fitting) and the cast of Red Dwarf, I was too busy obsessing with Sensible Soccer and, um, more Sensible Soccer to listen. More fool me. Because a full 15 years later, I finally got into Worms when my lovely wife – who, very fortunately for me, is a big PS3 fan – insisted we download it from the PlayStation Store.

'bloomer' wouldn't completely embarrass me online, and sure enough I was soon waging wars with other worms from all over Europe on the nets, and winning. But every time I played the lovely lady, she decimated me. While I was going for spectacular screen-clearing kills, she'd methodically pick my boys off one by one. Every time. On the rare occasions that I did get a numbers advantage, I'd start sweating and panicking like I was about to head into an actual real-life conflict, leading to the kind of stupid

Earthly goodness

I instantly understood what all the fuss was about. Worms is, of course, fantastic. It had me the very first time an angelic 'haaaaa-le-lu-jah!' echoed across the room before five invertebrates – two mine, three the wife's – were sent to their deaths in a variety of different directions. Amazing! Pretty soon I was creating my own squads named after my own compulsions – Miami Dolphins, Thundercats, WWE wrestlers – and

Men live on Mars, women on Venus, worms on Uranus.



“Every time I played my lady, she decimated me.”

unable to play anything else as Worms' maddeningly, disgustingly competitive appeal continually drew me back in.

But herein lay my problem. I've always been disruptively competitive, the type to spend four hours in a "f***-the-entire-world!" hump after losing something as trivial as a five-a-side kickabout. And my wife is the very same. Friendly games of Risk usually degenerate into fraught, grumpy staring matches with both of us steadfastly refusing to relinquish our final troops. SingStar, once her greatest rival for my affections, has essentially been ruined by the fact she now beats me on *every song ever*. And so I should have known all along that my time with Worms was destined to be a) distressingly abrupt and b) inescapably defeatist.

So it proved. I got stuck into the single-player mode so that my status as a Worms' late

mistakes that would allow her to win. Again and again and again. And again.

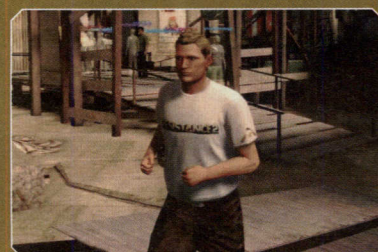
Before long, I'd stopped laughing at the glorious holy hand grenade sound effect, because it usually signalled the last act of another emphatic defeat. I could no longer enjoy it when Chad, captain of my Dolphins squadron, remarked 'it's a touchdown!' in a high-pitched Americanised squeal after taking out a rival worm, because I knew my wife would be scoring her very own touchdown on Chad, most likely with a super sheep replacing an oval ball, on the very next go.

So in the end, unlike in Risk, I waved the white flag and called it a day. It took me over 15 years to discover Worms, and 15 days for my otherwise wonderful wife to spoil it for me. The worst part? After discovering my infatuation with Buzz!, she wants to play that next...

LETTER FROM HOME

Nathan Ditum is whistling the Star Wars tune in the Resistance Home space

“The turret-shooter mini-game in the Resistance Home space reminds me loads of that bit in Star Wars when Han and Luke protect the Millennium Falcon from four TIE fighters after they've escaped from the Death Star. The turret has two sets of alternate firing guns and everything, and I play the music over in my head while I'm shooting waves of lo-res Chimeran ships. The big difference is that at the end of the fight in Star Wars everyone has a big hug and is sad about Obi Wan being dead, but in the Resistance space I get a free T-shirt with 'Resistance 2' written on it which I can wear to show all the noobs I got to level five. Level five!”





Lightsaber Umbrella

When rain it does, get wet you will not. This glowing broly will keep off the summer storms and satisfy your inner Jedi, but will not make you immune to awkward eye contact with strangers.

£20

iwantoneofthose.com

HM3 Starcruiser

Available in white or red gold limited edition, at the price of a nice car. There are watches that tell the time, and there are watches that say, "I've just stepped off my yacht."

£46,000

mbandf.com



Hexbug Robot

A tiny, sound-sensitive robot that offers all the fun of a pet cockroach, with none of the hygiene issues. "Sorry Twitchy, I've met someone else..."

£10

iwantoneofthose.com



Want that

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people

BMW Baby Racer 2

You might be stuck driving a Volvo, but that doesn't mean your two-year-old can't be pimp of the playgroup.

£73

bmw-shop.com



Samsung BD-P4600

Because it's the world's slimmest Blu-ray player, and because you can never have too many ways to watch pretty ladies in high definition.

£200

samsung.com



Mobiado Professional Phone

It won't make the break-up chat with your girlfriend any easier, but that rose gold finish will offset your tears beautifully.

£2,600

mobiado.com



Ravage Flash Drive

Imagine the boss's face when you whip out your Powerpoint presentation on this 2GB Transformers-themed USB.

£27

bigbadtoystore.com

Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press

Sony MHS-CM1

Webbie

Who watches the watchmen? That'll be you and Sony's new HD camcorder

Screen

Considering the Webbie's tiny dimensions, its 2.5" LCD delivers impressive clarity. Add to this its ability to swivel around 270°, and a quick-start function (open the screen and the Webbie is ready to rock) and you can expect to see a dramatic hike in the quality of celebrity sex tapes over the coming months.



£125

sonystyle.co.uk

In a nutshell

Some day, the bloated red giant of internet celebrity will collapse under the weight of a billion clawing egos, triggering a catastrophic talent black hole that will suck the righteous light of true creativity inside out through Satan's fundament. Until then, all that stands between you and a distant job appraisal where you're asked to explain your short-lived YouTube series, Naked Bong Karaoke, is a terrifying hunger for peer approval and the Webbie, Sony's Twitterati-friendly, mini-HD camcorder.

What's so special?

Barely longer than two AA batteries, the Webbie is small enough to carry anywhere, enabling you to become the oblivious grit in your social circle's fun sandwich as you document every last shark-eyed glance, inappropriate fondle and 2am, party-garden relationship meltdown in glorious HD. And should the 1080p mode's 340-minute recording time (from a 16GB Memory Stick Pro Duo) not be enough to film the entire festival, you can switch down to 720p (550 minutes), or *really* slum it for 990 minutes of pixelly standard-def VGA.

Tell me more...

The Webbie's MPEG4 recording format is perfectly compressed for internet sharing. What's more, the camcorder's Picture Motion Browser software makes editing and uploading so easy that you can now experience the icy vice of regret tightening long before your inner critic questions the wisdom of posting a bitter 85-minute break-up vlog entitled 'Die Diane'. There's even a dedicated 5MP sensor, enabling you to capture stills of your sad smiley face for the subsequent, apologetic emails.



The facts

- 43 x 61 x 105mm
- 2.5" 4:3 LCD display
- Still picture resolution: 5 Megapixel
- HD video resolution: 1440x1080
- Storage medium: MemoryStick Pro Duo
- High-speed USB 2.0
- Video format: MPEG4
- 5x optical zoom
- 20x digital zoom



Presets

Whether you're talking 5MP snaps or recording HD video, the Webbie has a preset to help you bag the perfect shot with minimum fuss. Our favourites? Landscape, and Low Twilight (or 'Behind The Bins' as we like to call it).

Battery

Unless you have a pacemaker you've probably never given much thought to battery life, but the Webbie's latest generation Lithium Ion units may change that. They're immune to the life-shortening 'memory effect'. Bottom line: you can recharge them whenever you like without reducing their capacity.

PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

▲ Up ▼ Down ● Non mover + New entry

PS3

- 1 + Prototype
- 2 ▼ inFamous
- 3 ▼ UFC 2009: Undisputed
- 4 ▼ Red Faction: Guerrilla
- 5 ▼ Virtua Tennis 2009
- 6 ▲ Call Of Duty: World At War
- 7 ▼ Terminator Salvation
- 8 ▼ Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare
- 9 ▼ FIFA 09
- 10 ▲ Killzone 2

Source chart-track.co.uk

PS2

- 1 ▲ FIFA 09
- 2 ● Call Of Duty: World At War
- 3 ▼ Ben 10 Alien Force
- 4 + Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings
- 5 ▲ Guitar Hero Metallica
- 6 ▼ Guitar Hero World Tour
- 7 ▲ Tomb Raider Underworld
- 8 ▼ X-Men Origins: Wolverine
- 9 ▼ Need For Speed Undercover
- 10 ▼ WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009

Source chart-track.co.uk

PSP

- 1 ● FIFA 09
- 2 ● Resistance Retribution
- 3 ● Ben 10 Alien Force
- 4 ● Football Manager 2009
- 5 ● Need For Speed Undercover
- 6 + Indiana Jones ATSOX
- 7 ● X-Men Origins: Wolverine
- 8 ▼ SBK-09 SWC
- 9 ▼ WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009
- 10 ● Ubisoft Action Pack

Source chart-track.co.uk

The PlayStation entertainment plan

Fill up your life with our monthly guide

Monday

JUL 06

Costly thriller

Get away from your real-life financial woes, and stay in with a film about corrupt bankers. Blu-ray The International also has Naomi Watts. everybodypays.com

Tuesday

07

Issue 34 on sale

You're reading it now. Marvel at the squiggly words and bright colours, then tell us what you heart and hate [what?!] at opm@futurenet.com.

Wednesday



Thursday



Friday

10

Horat leader

Think Ali G but flamboyantly camp, Austrian and with a fetish for fashionistas. Sacha Baron Cohen's comedy caper Bruno is out at cinemas today. thebrunomovie.com

Saturday

Sunday



13

Cat litter

Glossy popsters The Pussycat Dolls release their new single, Hush Hush. Prediction: the pretty one will sing, the others will dance. pcdmusic.com



15

Coastal creation

Crytek UK, Media Molecule and Ubisoft take their games to Brighton's Develop Conference 2009. snipurl.com/bm9S



17

Magic flick

Watch out for people with pointy hats and plastic wands - Harry Potter And The Half Blood Prince is out at cinemas today. harrypotter.warnerbros.co.uk

19

Slow movement

Think Gran Turismo is intense? You haven't tried snail racing. Grab a gastropod and head to the snail racing championships in Congham, Norfolk. snailracing.net

20

Nick knows

Out on Blu-ray today. Knowing sees Nicholas Cage and his latest toupee face up to a maths puzzle that can predict the end of the world. Riiiiight. tinyurl.com/ngpbup



24

Mappy campers

Camp Bestival, the soft and cuddly festival, brings Florence And The Machine, PJ Harvey and knitting to Lulworth Castle in Dorset. campbestival.co.uk

25

Don't you want it

The Human League and The Zutons headline the Scottish Wickerman Festival. Human sacrifice not guaranteed. thewickermanfestival.co.uk

26

Shanghai nights

The Game Developers Conference descends on Shanghai, China, for game-chat and pixel-pondering. Ubisoft will be among those present. chinagdc.com

27

Scream screen

Pixar's masterpiece Monsters Inc is finally out on Blu-ray. We're happy right to the tips of our tentacles. monstersinc.co.uk



31

Jurassic lark

Get sucked into an alternate reality with Anna Friel (yes!) only to discover it's full of angry dinosaurs (no!). Land Of The Lost is out in cinemas today. landofthelost.net

AUG 01

WIN!

Mosh to Guitar Hero stars Metallica at the Sonisphere Festival with our rocking competition [see opposite page]. sonispherefestivals.com



04 Aug
Issue 35 on sale.
Subscribe now on
page 23

07

Toy soldier

Fighting secret wars and squeezing into tight clothing, GI Joe: The Rise Of Cobra is out in cinemas today. hasbro.com/gijoe/en_US



09

On Tour

See fountains and fireworks at the Glastonbury Abbey Extravaganza. Mylene Klass will be there, as will the Royal Philharmonic. snipurl.com/bxq5j



01 Aug
Sonisphere
Festival

Precious metal

See Metallica live at Sonisphere Festival

You've earned your degree from the School Of Rock on your plastic guitar; now watch the pros do it for real. We've got a star prize of two tickets to Sonisphere at Knebworth on 1-2 August to see Metallica, Nine Inch Nails and more. The winner also gets a GH: Metallica PS3 guitar bundle and limited-edition T-shirt. Five runners-up nab the T-shirt and a copy of the game. To be in with a chance, correctly answer this question:

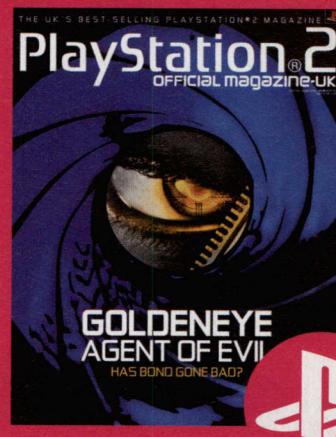
What is the name of Metallica's fast-thrashing Danish drummer?

A MIKE BORDIN B STEVEN ADLER C LARS ULRICH



Text using the word 'Rock' followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name and address to 87474. Or enter at futurecomps.co.uk/opm34. Closing date: 23 July 2009.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS Competition closes 23/07/09. Prize is festival ticket (including camping) only, and does not include travel or any other cost. You will receive your tickets no later than 31 July. Only UK residents aged 18 and over may enter. By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Ltd and related third parties. If you do not want to receive this info please text the word 'STOP' at the end of your message. Texts will be charged at £1.50 plus your standard network rate. By taking part, you agree to be bound by the Competition Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at www.futurepubs.com. The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries after the start date 01/07/2009. Prize draws will take place on 24/07/2009. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition, or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won. Publicity may be given to any winners and/or entrants and their names and/or photographs printed. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Proof of posting shall not be deemed proof of delivery. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency) and are limited to one per household. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Future Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. Receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Competition Rules. No purchase necessary. Winner lists are available by written request within three months of the closing date from Future Publishing Ltd.



FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

This month we visit
OPS2 #49

A high-concept cover for issue #49's celebration of the forthcoming **GoldenEye: Rogue Agent** (here still called Agent Of Evil) saw a circular cut-out front page in classic opening Bond credits style, and a 'choose your own adventure' feature at the start of the mag. Let it never be said that we are under-ambitious.

News was more conventional, featuring a reveal of **WWE Smackdown vs Raw** (accompanied by an even more revealing snap of Stacy Keibler), first gameplay details from **Pro Evo 4** (go, weighted through-balls!) and a tip that Al Pacino's **Scarface** would soon be heading to PS2 thanks to a recently registered trademark.

Resi Outbreak opened previews, where we reacted to the revelation that it *wouldn't* feature online play with uncharacteristic optimism ("We're hoping that'll change when Capcom releases Outbreak File #2"). We also got stuck in to **Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy** ("Flinging guards around like meat puppets is the new stealth"), **Killzone** ("We can't stop pining for that elusive finished version"), and the apocalyptically distasteful jingoistic duck-hunt **America's 10 Most Wanted**.

Summer blockbusters dominated the reviews section. Open-world swinger **Spider-Man 2** earned an unexpectedly decent 8/10 ("Sets a new standard for movie crossovers"), while wailing disaster **Catwoman** coughed up a less impressive 5/10 ("One for the masochists"). We gave desperate sequel **Driv3r** 6/10, complaining that it looked great and had fancy cars, but "As a game - and we've given the phrasing of this some considerable thought - it is sh*t." But not as sh*t as **ExZeus** ("No to everything") 1/10.

FIVE MINUTE SKIVE

Games to play when the boss isn't looking



Swine Fighter

Now that swine flu hasn't completely wiped out back bacon, pork scratchings and hog roasts we can all have a big old laugh about it, right? Great! Cure as many oinkers as you can in 20 manic seconds.

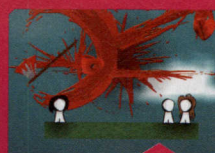
swinefighter.com



Don't Sh*t Your Pants

Can a text adventure game really make the simple task of taking a dump a magical adventure? No, but it might make you the comedy hero of the office email chain for a day.

snipurl.com/hsmow



The Game

A smart-arsed must-play, unless you can name one other game that can teach you about communism, love, physics and a whole lot more, with just a small platform and lots of falling to your death.

snipurl.com/hsnmp

STARTING TO LAG?

When 'just one more hour' turns into days and you're starting to lag, it's time to GameSafe and refuel with Rustlers - the hot n' tasty snack ready in seconds.



Rustlers
Gamesafe
KEEPING GAMERS ALIVE



FAST FUEL FOR REAL GAMERS

www.rustlersgamesafe.com



Preview

48 ALIENS VS PREDATOR

"Look, I will *not* tell you again. Play nicely or we will get straight back on the ship and go home!"

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK Previews

Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

E3's recent gamesplosion has left us bouncing up and down on Previews like a bulging holiday suitcase. Somehow we've managed to fit it all in, which is why you'll find 30 games here for you to enjoy. The next few months are going to be huge on PS3 and this is where you'll find out about everything first.

There's something for everyone. From shooters like *Homefront* or *Operation Flashpoint*, to adventures like *Assassin's Creed II* and *Dante's Inferno*, to some serious WTF? in the shape of *Detuned*. Plus *Sonic's* back (again) in a game that's not bum. (No, *really*.)

Plus we've a world-first look at *Avatar*, the game of James Cameron's massively ambitious movie. Not only is it the first game in HD 3D (just like the movie) but we speak to Mr Cameron himself about how he's helping Ubisoft make it.

If you're wondering where all the Sony stuff is, it's in our special feature you'll find after Previews, beginning on page 58. Kratos and Drake are waiting...



42

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA 2

This is how to make an Xbox-to-PS3 sequel feel special: fresh enemies, extra weapons, 30 new challenge levels, online co-op and resident hotty Rachel as a playable character.



45

ASSASSIN'S CREED II

One hidden blade good, two better. With the knifey sequel relocating to Renaissance Venice, find out what other tricks new assassin Ezio has up his sleeve.



52

LOST PLANET 2

The planet of EDN III might have thawed out but that only means bigger, angrier monsters. Good job you can now fight them with three mates online. "You go first Dave."



Preview

Quick pitch

Space cowboy

It's a frontier story on a green planet, where humans are clashing with the native alien Na'vi.


Split narrative

Players fight alongside the Na'vi resistance (as in the film) or as human marines.

Another dimension

Like the film, the game is being made in 3D. You'll need a stereoscopic TV to see it though. Yeah, us neither.





Even without the benefits of 3D, the world of Avatar looks like a fantasy nerd's wet dream. Which, in this case, is a good thing.

The Game's A Bit Special **Format** PS3 **ETA** November **Pub** Ubisoft **Dev** Ubisoft Montreal

Avatar

△ Cameron ○ Aliens ⊗ 3D ◻ Shooter

The level of secrecy surrounding James Cameron's new sci-fi epic is so high that the Ubisoft Montreal team working on the PS3 game had to build a concealed studio within their regular studio to keep it hidden. What we can tell you is that the film's closely-guarded plot is like an intergalactic Dances With Wolves, with humans battling indigenous aliens called Na'vi on a mineral-rich planet. The game – which we've seen behind closed doors – takes place away from

the big-screen story, giving you a choice between fighting for the human RDA corporation, or Na'vi resistance. Either way, there's plenty of shooting. "There might be an ecological tone to the movie," says exec producer Patrick Naud, "but it's a big action movie – a *really* big action movie. That's why we're doing a big action game." Yeah, that, and because a game of a Kevin Costner Western in space would suck.

The game currently looks a lot like Lost Planet – solid third-person ➤



There's a definite Halo/Lost Planet feel to the combination of marine military tech and prehistoric monsters. The two mix with bloody results.



Mech suits bring to mind the end of Cameron's classic, Aliens. In Avatar they're upgradeable, like the rest of your weapons.

shooting in a lush off-world environment. It's all chunky future tech, Halo-ish dropships and buggies, clashing with a vivid fantasy setting full of prehistoric beasts and waterfalls cascading from floating mountains. The real reason to get excited, though, is the coming together of James Cameron (the man behind Aliens and Terminator with a habit of redefining special effects technology) and Ubisoft Montreal (the studio hand-picked by Peter Jackson to create the surprisingly good videogame version of his 2005 blockbuster King Kong).

Just like Jackson, whose WETA SFX team is working on the Avatar film, Cameron is advising on the game. Ubi has also been sharing assets and ideas with WETA designers – locations, concept art, vehicle, creature and weapon designs. It's been a two-way process with some of the in-game material impressing Cameron enough for him to incorporate it into the film itself. This *isn't* a throwaway 'game of the film' churned out for a quick buck. Ubisoft does these things properly – right down to the fact that, like the film, the game will be in 3D.

"James Cameron came to us and said, 'How about doing the game in

Q On a day-to-day basis, how involved have you been with the Avatar game?

A I wouldn't say day-to-day, but month-to-month. They'd [Ubisoft Montreal] come back with art, storylines, characters, and concepts for how they wanted the gameplay to work, and I'd make comments. Usually, it was the visits where they brought in the development kit and we'd watch it, play it, and talk about it. But this isn't every day. I'm making my movie every day; they're making their game every day.

Q Was the plot of the film a natural fit for a game?

A Absolutely. You've got an antagonism between philosophies. You've got technological humans and the Na'vi, who live on a Neolithic level but are very harmonious with their environment. They can harvest from it what they need in a time of great crisis. And we've seen this conflict – with the Europeans coming to the Americas, and in our own history – and we know it tends to end badly for the indigenous people. But the Na'vi aren't to be discounted. They've certainly got some tricks up their sleeves.

Q What were Ubisoft's faces like when you said you wanted full 3D in the game?

A To be honest, they were hesitant – they didn't even think it was possible. But I planted the seed. I didn't say, 'Guys, you've got to do this. It's deal or no deal.' But I said they should really think about trying to do this in stereo [3D] because it's the right way to do it. They went away, and a couple of months later they came back and showed me a stereo demo that convinced us all.

Q Will 3D have the same impact on games as it's having on cinema?

A These changes are led by individual titles, not ideas or philosophies on new technology. The idea of stereoscopic digital projection has been around for about seven or eight years. It's only taking off now because there've been a number of good films to drive it. What we're doing with this game is important, because if the game's successful and other people try to emulate it, then stereo game development

3D?" explains Naud with a smile. "And we said, 'Let's investigate!'" Ubi came back a few months later with a "pretty solid" 3D demo, which replicated the two-camera process used to create 3D movie images by programming a second camera position into the game and "rendering everything twice".

This was about two years ago, and when we see the game running on a 103" prototype of a Panasonic stereoscopic TV (wearing black polarised glasses, just like in the

Q&A

James Cameron talks about Avatar the game and the future of 3D



will become a major thing. And, if it does, it's going to drive stereo in the home.

Q How will the relationship between games and movies have developed five years from now?

A You'll still have the straight licence deals and they'll be okay – as good as the game guys can do. But if we do our jobs well with this one then maybe others will look and say, 'Oh yeah, this is how you do it.' I would look at a sequel to Avatar being something where I sit in a room with their creative people and we think about cool ideas that should be in the game and movie simultaneously. So there might be a portal or place in the game that you can't pass through, but there'll be clues in the movie, and vice-versa.

Q Have you solved the 'uncanny valley' problem [almost realistic CG humans creeping people out]?

A We talked about it a lot. Game cinematics are honestly still in the uncanny valley, but they'll get through it. The limit is in the speed of real-time rendering. A given frame in Avatar might take 50 to 100 hours to render. That's per frame, per processor, so they have 6,000 processors running in parallel at a render farm so they can do five or six shots per night. But I think our fingernails are locked in the cliff on the other side of the uncanny valley; sometimes we climb up, sometimes we slip back.

cinema) as a climax to our super secret preview, the results are incredible. One moment has a giant stegosaurus-style beast killed by our marine hero – he stands at the head with the tail pointing out towards the camera, and the depth of field effect smoothly pulling the image towards us. Whatever else the game will be – and it looks good – the main thing we take away is that 3D is real, it's happening, and it looks a lot like the future.

Dev talk



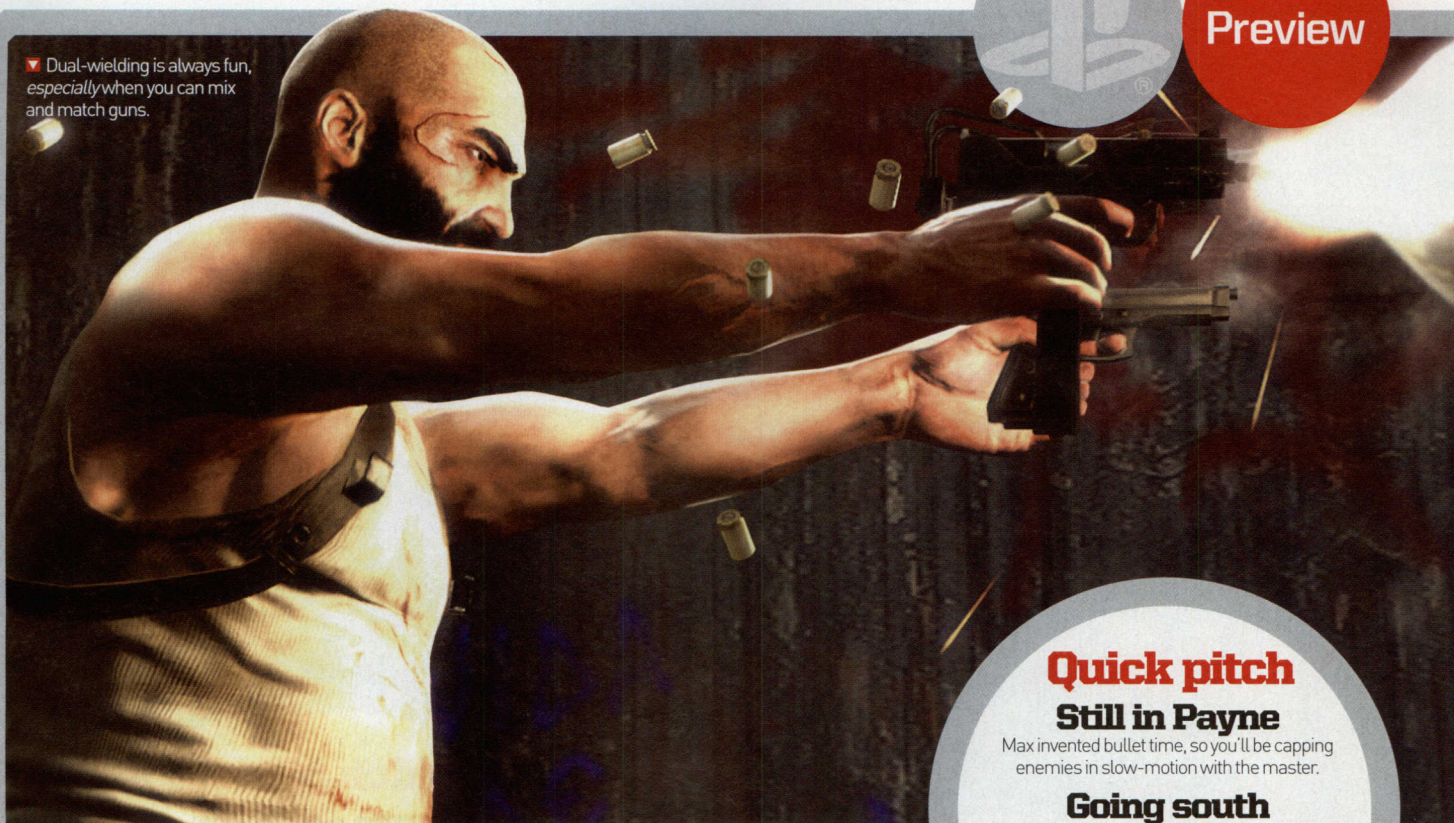
"Only a few people will have the opportunity to play in 3D. But it will still be a great game. It's like playing in stereo instead of surround sound. It's the same game, one just has more immersion. That's how we're looking at it."

Patrick Naud
Executive producer,
Ubisoft Montreal



Preview

✓ Dual-wielding is always fun, especially when you can mix and match guns.



Quick pitch

Still in Payne

Max invented bullet time, so you'll be capping enemies in slow-motion with the master.

Going south

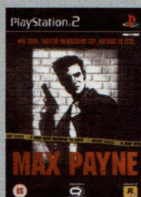
The series has moved to São Paulo – one of the largest and most violent cities in South America.

In house

Rockstar's Vancouver studio (who did *Bully*) will be developing this, instead of creator Remedy.

Prequels

Also in the series



Max Payne

(PS2, 2001)
Stylish noir shooter responsible for bullet time as we know it.



Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne

(PS2, 2003)
Twist-filled plot as Max fights Russian mafia.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** Winter **Pub** Rockstar **Dev** Rockstar Vancouver

Max Payne 3

△ Old ○ Dog × New □ Guns

You remember Max Payne? Gaunt New York copper with the kick-ass leather jacket? Well forget him. The bald slab of beardy meat you see here is the present-day Payne. 12 years of alcoholism and painkiller addiction (following the murder of his wife and a lifetime trawling the underbelly of crime) have changed him. But appearances are deceptive. This is the same dual-wielding force of nature – older, angrier, but still Payne.

This time the action is set in São Paulo and sees Max working in private security. While the previous games

were influenced by film noir, this takes inspiration from violent tales like *City Of God* and *Elite Squad* – gun-heavy movies set in Brazil. Rockstar says that, despite the changes, "Noir is a style, not a place and colour scheme," implying there's still a dark journey ahead.

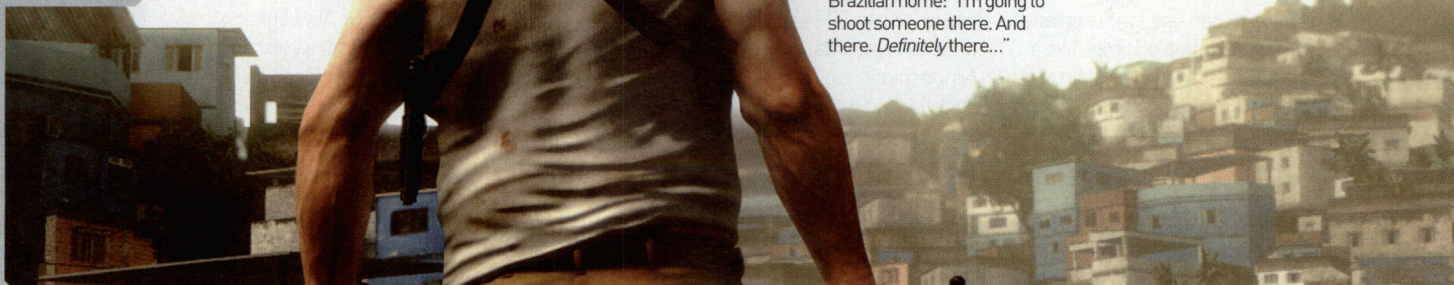
Fall guy

Diving through the air in slow-motion, spraying out hot leaden death is still the order of the day, but now benefits from both *GTA IV*'s *Rage* engine and the *Euphoria* animation system. Enemies will fall and react

realistically to every bullet and even Max will behave believably, putting one hand to the floor to stand up, while firing back with his other. Bullet time moments will also be extended into longer, more involved sequences – like a desperate slide down a rusty favela roof, picking off surrounding enemies as you fall. There will be a cover system to provide a breather between shootouts and you can use human shields, which should be invaluable in the maze-like alleys of Brazil's slums.

Finally, a new recovery system enables you to cheat death by capping your killer before the screen fades to black. Nobody likes a quitter after all.

☑ Max surveys his new Brazilian home: "I'm going to shoot someone there. And there. *Definitely* there..."



041



Preview

PS
042

Quick pitch

Weapon collector

Ryu has a Dragon Sword, throwing stars, magic spells, ninja claws and plenty more besides.

Light up

Enemies leave behind glowing essence that can top up health, charge magic and upgrade kit.

Sightseeing

Set in modern-day Japan, Ryu's quest will take him from the skyscrapers of Tokyo to the fiery belly of Mount Fuji.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** Autumn **Pub** Tecmo **Koel** **Dev** Team Ninja

Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

⬆ Beasts ⬇ Blood ✕ Blades ◻ Babes

Just when you thought the Ninja Gaiden Sigma series couldn't get any more gruesome, hero Ryu Hayabusa learns the art of dismemberment. The hack and slash series has always been heavy on the gore, and now you can use your swift and deadly ninja skills to chop off limbs like a psychopathic surgeon.

This time out, ninja Ryu is trying to stop the Black Spider clan resurrecting the uber evil Archfiend, which is as good an excuse as any for slicing things up. Ryu might have new moves, but so do the bad guys. Enemies will keep coming even if

they're missing their legs, dragging their bleeding carcasses across the floor. You can only admire their persistence. Only brutal Obliteration Techniques – finishing moves that are as messy as they are deadly – can stop them. These new moves add to Ryu's already considerable arsenal of swords, scythes, staffs, and Ninpo magic, which can all be upgraded by collecting the glowing essence your slain enemies leave behind.

Karate kids

The game appeared on Xbox 360 last year as Ninja Gaiden II, but Sigma 2 is by

no means sloppy seconds. The PS3 version features brand new characters, weapons, enemies, bosses, online co-op, 30 special challenge levels and playable lady friends. These include Ayane, a purple-haired ninja kitten who's also appeared in the Dead Or Alive fighting series, Momiiji, a learner ninja with killer range attacks, and busty blonde Rachel. There will also be leaderboards to track your progress against other ninja fanciers online. The game is due out this autumn, so you can expect a whole load of severed limbs to be falling with the leaves. Chop!

▲ New levels will be playable with fighter and leather fan, Rachel.



Dev talk



"With Sigma 2, Team Ninja hopes that we can really convince the hardest-core fan of Ninja Gaiden as much as satisfy newcomers that this is a great action game."
Yosuke Hayashi
 Director, Team Ninja

Could Be A Contender

Fairytale Fights



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

The premise

It's time to save the world by slicing your way through famous fairytale characters.

The reality

It's God Of War, only with cute bunnies taking the place of cyclops and harpies.

The hook

You'll be able to literally slice and dice your enemies into chunks while the resulting blood will drench everything in sight.

The inspiration

Nursery rhymes and fairytales. Little Red Riding Hood and The Pied Piper are the only confirmed characters so far.

The chances

Fat Princess proves that cute violence can work, and this sick take on well-known kids' stories could prove to be a right laugh.

Format PS3 **ETA** TBC **Pub** Playlogic
Dev Playlogic Game Factory

It's ninja versus werewolf – our money's on the man in black holding the giant bloodied mace...



On The Box Judged by their covers



GI Joe

Compete to successfully pull off heroic poses by matching on-screen prompts. Players earn points for weapon placement, muscle definition and looking really stern.

Format PS3 **ETA** 31 Jul **Pub** EA



Need For Speed Shift

EA loses the run of itself and adds a streamer option to car customisation. Not pictured: deely boppers, spook-dokes and one of those horns that does all the sirens.

Format PS3 **ETA** Sep **Pub** EA



Red Dead Redemption

A cowboy sets out on a mission of revenge against all the people who mock his giant hand. When anyone questions him he says, "I'm doin' it for ma. Pow!"

Format PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** Rockstar



Preview



The Koreans roll over suburban USA.



For the Resistance, black is the new black.



"Mom! I parked the car wrong!"



Both sides look fairly generic at the moment.



Oooh! The quarterback is toast!



"Can I have a go on your death cart, please?"



It's best to be on the other end of this view.



Well-placed grenades root out the bad guys.



Who is this dude even firing at?



If this shot made a noise it'd be 'BRRRAP'.



What energy crisis? Yet another fire.



The game goes big on remote drones.



Chunky vehicles can plough through walls.



Creeping through the long grass.

Quick pitch

Korean overlords

Set 20 years into the future, North Korea has occupied the USA following an energy crisis.

Guns of tomorrow

Developer Kaos has worked with weapon experts to get realistic future tech into the game.

Apocalypse, then

Apocalypse Now writer (and National Rifle Association hero) John Milius provides the game's story.

Rivals



Modern Warfare 2

(PS3, Activision)
Sequel to the best shooter ever, now full of all-new Russian ultranationalists to ruthlessly mow down.



Brink

(PS3, Bethesda)
Bright, distinctive and dystopic future shooter. The most exciting thing we saw at E3.



Battlefield Bad Company 2

(PS3, EA)
DICE's now-regular update sends the Bad Company boys to the Russian mountains.

Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub THQ Dev Kaos

Homefront

⬆ Occupation ⬇ Resistance ⊗ Future ◻ War

Who else but John Milius would you get to write your 'Communists-invade-USA' shooter? The Hollywood hack not only wrote the famous line "Charlie don't surf", but also directed seething right-wing 'told-you-so' fantasy Red Dawn, where a weakened USA is invaded by rampaging Reds.

The US of K

Homefront is Red Dawn: Redux, switched from 1984 to a desolate future where an energy crisis has led to a North Korean occupation of the US. This means two things: it's up to you to kick the Korean army's ass as part of the American Civilian Resistance, and do it with a range of prototype future tech (think Ghost Recon-style drones, robo-tanks,

and guns with extra big bullets).

What we've seen so far isn't overly inspiring (solid, square-looking suburbia – like Resistance 2 without the aliens) but developer Kaos' previous effort, Frontlines, is encouraging. The similarly apocalyptic FPS wasn't on PS3, but the core shooting was strong. The team is also talking up the 'drama engine', which keeps the action centred on you without heavy-handed scripting – trash a Korean army truck, for instance, and it'll launch itself in your direction. Our take: stuff the thing full of cigar-chomping Regan-era one-liners, keep the explosion spotlight turned on the player at all times, and it might just work.





When you hunt down your target there's much less chit chat, a lot more stab stab.



Hype Magnet **Format** PS3 **ETA** 17 November **Pub** Ubisoft **Dev** Ubisoft Montreal

Assassin's Creed II

Ⓐ Crowds Ⓞ Weapons ✕ Flying Ⓚ Haystacks

Dev talk



"We're giving players a double hidden blade. It sounds cheesy, but it's just cool to assassinate two guys at the same time."

Patrice Desilets
Creative director,
Ubisoft Montreal

It's official: the hoodie is back in fashion. Especially if you're an Italian assassin with a taste for vengeance. And a dream of starring in one of the year's biggest sequels. New character Ezio is an aristocratic wannabe rather than a real assassin but, motivated by revenge, he picks up a sword and starts learning real fast. Not only does his training in unarmed combat mean he can disarm and use enemies' weapons against them, his new and improved twin arm blades enable him to take out two people at once. And for maximum stabbage, you can connect

your PS3 to PSP game Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines (more of that on page 79), and Ezio will get access to six extra weapons.



Job satisfaction

Other new features include a much greater variety to the gameplay. Creative director Patrice Desilets told us there will be more than 15 mission types instead of the previous game's handful of tasks, with chase and escort objectives among the new activities. Desilets also let slip that Ezio will be able to visit tailors to customise his clothes. Information gathering (where frustratingly you had to pick pockets or eavesdrop to gather intel

before every single hit) has been dropped in favour of a more open structure. Now you can get jobs from anyone you meet, especially the factions that populate the underworld. A day and night cycle adds extra variety to the setting, and the crowd is also filled with groups chatting and dancing and moving together, so the city feels more alive. You can still hide in haystacks, but new 'seeker' guards will hunt you down – if they get too close it's best to pull them in with you for a little game of hide the dagger.

And it all looks beautiful. The scenes we saw showed fireworks erupting over a Venetian renaissance party in a set-piece that ends with a night-time flight courtesy of Leonardo Da Vinci's famous glider. It's prettier than Natalie Portman on a really good day. Sigh.

5 big questions

1

Who is this Ezio bloke?

Born of noble blood, Ezio Auditore di Firenze is an educated charmer whose family has been murdered.

2

What about Desmond?

Ezio and Altair's ancestor is still being held captive by shady corporation Abstergo, who need his genetic memories.

3

Who are the factions?

Groups like courtesans and thieves will use your talents, and in return you'll get special favours and cash.

4

So I actually get paid?

The new economic system means you earn shiny coins and then spend them on upgrades at Da Vinci's weapon shop.

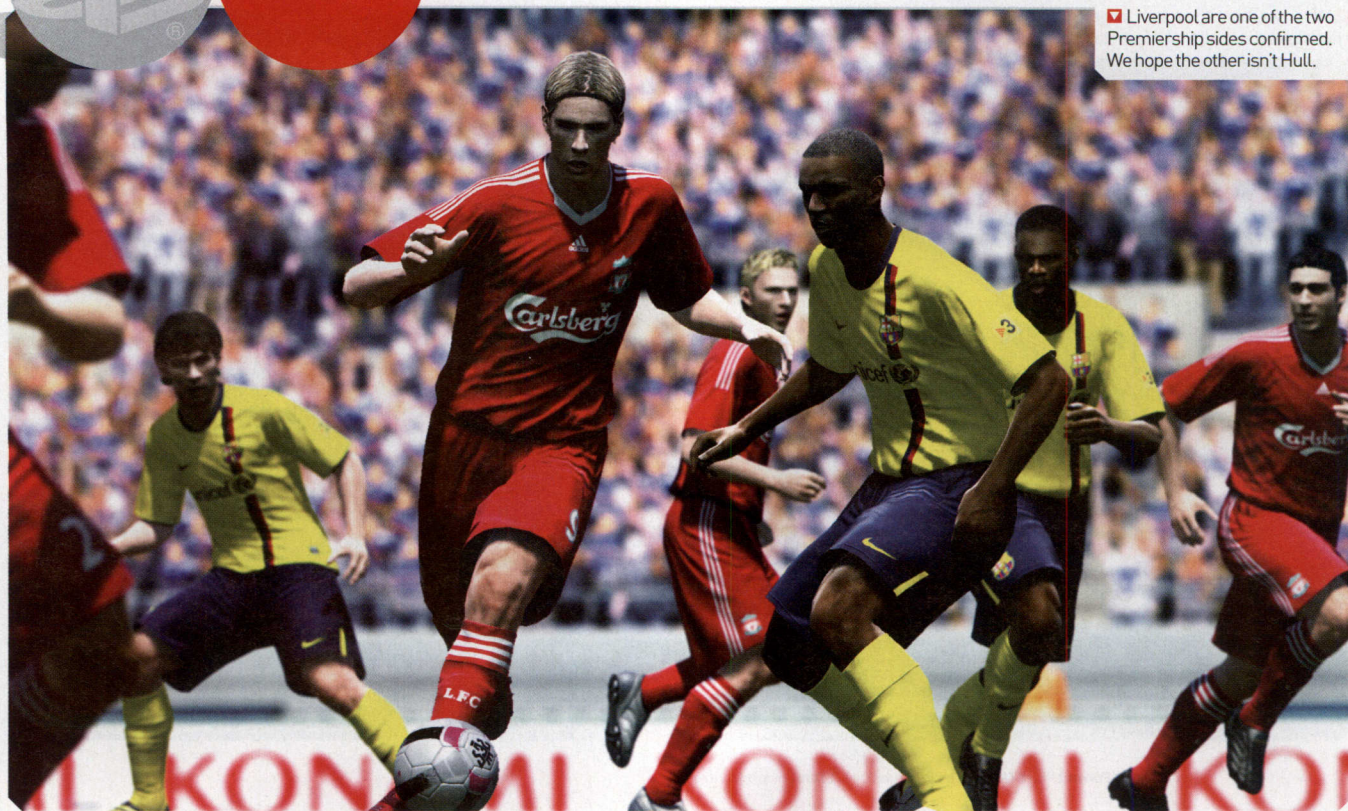
5

We're getting DLC, right?

Desilets won't say much on the subject, only that there are plans to create some. Multiplayer is being considered too.



Preview



✓ Liverpool are one of the two Premiership sides confirmed. We hope the other isn't Hull.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** October **Pub** Konami **Dev** Konami

Pro Evolution Soccer 2010

Ⓐ Messi Ⓞ Torres ✕ Power □ Gauge

Sort of big news, wannabe manager types: one of Pro Evo 10's new additions is a tactical system that developer Konami is calling Power Gauge (we know... but run with it for now). Head into your Team Setup menu and you'll find sliders for specific tactics named Defensive Line, Pressure Level, Attacking Style, Possession Switch and Receiving Position. Moving the sliders directly affects the way in which your team plays – so maxing out Defensive Line and Attacking Style means your team will flood forward, but leave loads of space in behind for the opposition to counter.

Last year's FIFA utilised a similar mechanic with its Custom Tactics menus, although nine months on we're still arguing about whether EA's slider system had any tangible effect. Either way, it's intriguing. (Although what Receiving Position does is anyone's guess. Then again, this wouldn't be PES without at least one instance of odd Japanglish tactical speak).

Whatever it gets up to in the dugout, PES 2010 will also have to perform on the field if it's going to keep up with its megabucks-spending rival. With this in mind, players' running styles have been recaptured to make them look noticeably less robotic – a small but crucial detail. And a motion capture session with cover star Lionel Messi means you'll be seeing a wealth of new animations incorporated. Will this mean the death of last year's spinning carousel of nothingness? It had better, or we're out. Well, maybe.

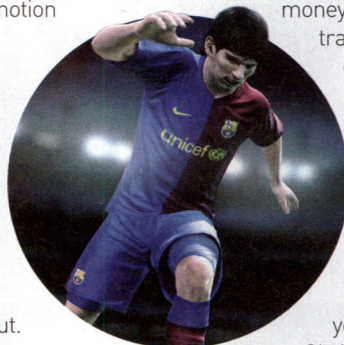
Table building

Big changes are also afoot in Master League – and they need to be, given that the mode has barely changed in a decade, while the FIFA series has constantly been tinkering with and

improving upon its plethora of marquee features. We've heard whispers that the revamped Master League mode will incorporate both the Champions League and Europa League (the new name for the UEFA Cup) this year – and that it'll use real money, rather than its traditional PES points currency. All of these changes bode well.

Finally, in piping hot news for editing obsessives the world over, the option to give your players untucked shirts is back, back, back! So all your fantasies of creating Chris Waddle circa 1990 can finally be brought to life. Each to his own, and all that.

We'll have detailed, hands-on thoughts on the new PES next month. Although we reserve the right to accidentally-on-purpose gloss over the untucked shirts thing.



Can't wait?
Play these



PES 2009
(PS3, 2008)

Still the purists' game of choice (and our best lunchtime buddy) despite multiple flaws.



FIFA 09
(PS3, 2008)

Once a laughing stock, but now on the verge of taking PES's crown after this superb outing.



Hype Magnet **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** Capcom **Dev** Blue Castle Games

Dead Rising 2

Ⓐ Zombies Ⓞ Drugs ✕ Games □ Activists

Why the big black 'censored' bars? We don't know, and Capcom isn't saying. In fact, it's not revealed much at all of late thanks to swine flu, which saw the company largely pull out of plans to be at E3. But we've garnered fresh info.

Like new character Stacey (right), who's apparently a zombie rights activist. She seems to be linked with Zombrex, a drug which, in an early viral trailer, was described as "almost completely effective in halting the progress of the zombie disease". Hopefully, that means it stops you turning into a brain muncher, rather than actually curing a case of 'full-blown zombie'. Because finding out the thousands of undead

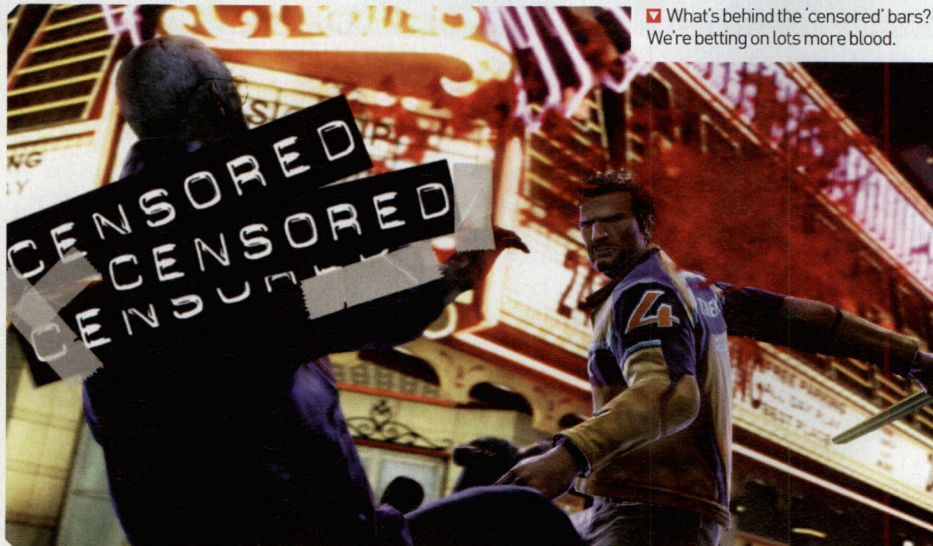


you chainsawed up could actually have been saved would be quite the downer.

We also now know that hero Chuck is a 'TiR contestant'. Our guess is that he's been dropped into zombie Vegas as part of some sort of Running Man-style contest.

That just leaves those big, stupid 'censored' bars. Our worry is that its new dev (Canadian Blue Castle has taken over from Capcom) is trying to prove a point – that it's made the game so gory, it can't be shown. If that's the case, then Blue Castle has missed the point of the tongue-in-cheek original. Turning the blood up to 11 won't make this a better game. *Making a better game* will make it a better game.

❑ What's behind the 'censored' bars? We're betting on lots more blood.



Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

▲ PSPgo, yo

It's slimmed down, far less fiddly and getting a stack of big-name games. What's not to love?

▲ Hammer time

Two OPMers declare Warhammer: Space Marine game of E3, then spend half a day swapping stories of painting tyrannids and eldar. Really.

▲ Only on PS3

Add Agent and Final Fantasy XIV to Sony exclusives Uncharted 2, God Of War III and GT5. That sweet tang? Victory, men.

▼ Aliens killed?

Intestines-themed office party canned as once-promising shooter Colonial Marines delayed yet again. Bah.

▼ MW2 goes OTT

We know this is blasphemy... but we're a tiny bit worried Modern Warfare 2 might be too flash for its own good. Skidoos? Really?

▼ Missing games

I Am Alive, LA Noire and new Hitman are still coming... but even our secretest squirrels won't reveal when. Spoilt wailing child throwing tantrum smiley face.

Dev talk



"Blue Castle proved they're serious about making a game that keeps that Capcom spice."
Keiji Inafune
Head of R&D, Capcom





Preview

Quick pitch

Natural selection

Human, Alien and Predator all have different weapons and skills to perfect in battle.

Trophy kill

Get up close to a marine and you can rip off their head, complete with spine.

Alien heroes

As well as multiplayer, there are also single-player stories for each species to complete.

048

Dark Horse **Format** PS3 **ETA** November **Pub** Sega **Dev** Rebellion

Aliens vs Predator

△ Remember ○ Short ⊗ Controlled □ Bursts

Dev talk



"The Predator is the most badass because he can cloak to stalk victims from the treetops before leaping down and ripping their heads off."

Sam Grice
Lead artist, Rebellion

While the 2004 film of the same name was awful, this can still work so long as it nails *that* feeling of your blood turning to ice as you turn to see a swarm of aliens bearing down on you. The bad news? Right now, it doesn't.

If it bleeds...

The main problem is there's no real sense of danger. Being set upon by an alien while playing as a marine is like a dog attack during COD4: press a button and you can shake off your snarly foe – hardly the blender-incarnate death

machine from the films. Even the whole 'acid for blood' thing is disappointing. Shoot an alien and there's a bit of splash damage. That's it. No screaming, no armour dissolving. It's pretty meh-tastic and fails to create any sense of tension.

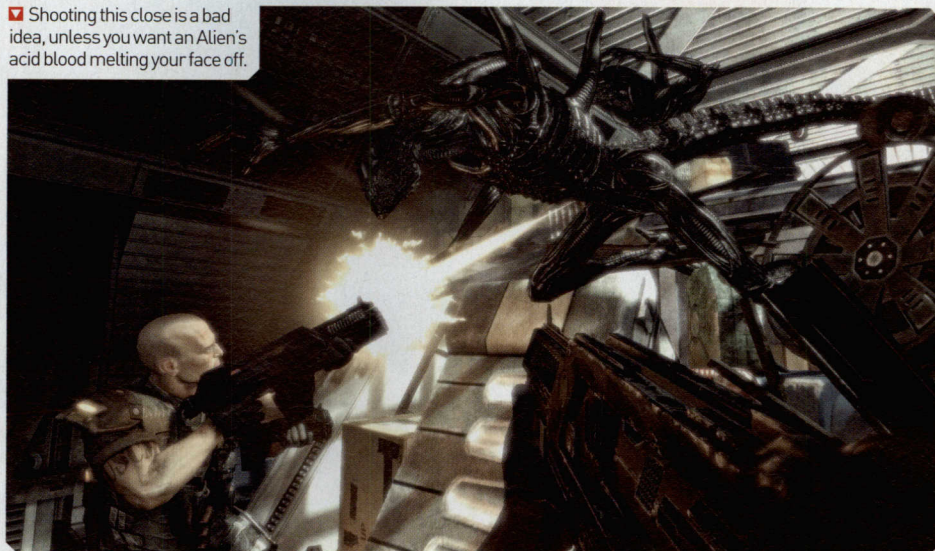
The different abilities between species at least create the potential for some interesting asymmetrical multiplayer. The aliens attack with a mix of claws, teeth and stabbing tail, use heightened senses to find enemies, and dart over walls and ceilings like big man-eating flies. The Marines *seem* an obvious choice with guns, armour and grenades

as well as motion trackers, but if we've learned anything from the movies, it's that humans mince up real easy.

That leaves us leaning towards the Predators. Not only do they get several vision modes, but they're armed with a plasma cannon and cloaking device. They also have a Focus Jump system which locks onto specific areas, enabling you to leap between tree branches just like in the movies. Sounds cool, and breeds hope for the online action. Still, the overall atmosphere needs big work if this isn't to go the same way as the horrific-for-the-wrong-reasons film.

**EXCLUSIVE
SHOTS**
PlayStation
Official Magazine - UK

❑ Shooting this close is a bad idea, unless you want an Alien's acid blood melting your face off.



By the numbers

Number of eggs built for Alien film	130
Initial running length of Alien	3h12m
Total number of times that the f-word is used in Aliens	25
Number of times by Bill Paxton	18
Pounds Arnie shed for Predator	25
Total human body count in Predator	64
Times the press saw the AVP movie before its release	0



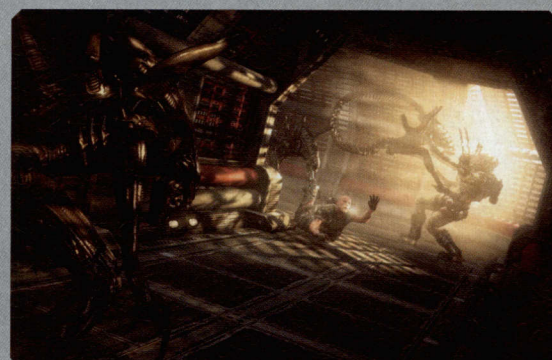
❑ The Predators can leap around from branch to branch, enabling them to close in on enemies fast.

❑ Previous games enabled you to impregnate enemies to gain new Alien soldiers. It's not been confirmed for AVP yet, but looks likely.

Alien Nation Three species on one planet means intergalactic gang warfare



You get plenty of guns as a Marine, but when the enemy can attack from the ceiling you need to stay sharp.



The Predators mix close-quarters combat with firepower. But while their plasma cannon is powerful, it's also slow to charge – not much use when the Aliens can attack in swarms.



Preview

Quick pitch

To Hell and back

You play Dante, who travels through the nine circles of Hell to rescue his squeeze Beatrice.

Renaissance man

Dante is a master of combat, slicing up enemies with a scythe or blasting them with holy magic.

Bloody mess

Foes are cut, slashed, ripped and torn. Even doors are living entities that you gut to open.



The Next... God Of War **Format** PS3 **ETA** 30 January 2010 **Pub** EA **Dev** Visceral Games

Dante's Inferno

△ Could ○ This ⊗ Kill □ Kratos?

You can hear the team at EA now: "Let's make a game where an angry man chops up mythical beasts. The kids love that." Dante's Inferno, from Dead Space developer Visceral Games, is mighty similar to Sony's own God Of War III. They share a dusty literary heritage, have the same ambition of gargantuan environmental scale, and take equal delight in garroting and eye-gouging any passing creature.

Drag me to Hell

For a 14th Century epic poem, Dante's Inferno fits a level-based game perfectly,

with its trapeze through the nine circles of Hell as Dante chases his love, Beatrice, through the Underworld. But more importantly, beheading goat-man demons never gets old.

Among the game's more obscure early creations is Charon, a *boat* with a man's head, which our hero tears off as a brutal introduction to Visceral's gory intent. And then it gets weird – with creepy unbaptised baby hordes, scythed up by Dante like infanticide is the new black, and an unashamedly nude ogre, representing gluttony, who not only tries to eat you whole but also has a repulsive turd and vomit attack.

It's not hard to see that this and GOW III have a similar visual identity, and both are keen to show off how big PS3 can render things – seeing Dante turn into a tiny pin-speck atop Phlegyas, a nigh-on skyscraper-sized demon, is a truly impressive sight.

In fact, while GOW III is a PS3 exclusive with a long-standing legacy of quality, Dante's Inferno is looking a worthy rival. It's derivative – combat and finishing moves are particularly familiar – but it's high-quality. Settings are the only real difference, so choosing between the two could come down to whether you prefer Italian demons or Greek monsters.

Rivals



God Of War III

(PS3, Sony)
Currently setting the bar for violent beat-'em-ups with its head-rip scene, Kratos is the one to watch.



Darksiders

(PS3, THQ)
You are War, one of the four horsemen, caught in a violent clash between Heaven and Hell.



Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

(PS3, Tecmo)
Returning ninja hero Ryu hacks up monstrous enemies to save humanity from the demonic Archfiend.

The hook Visit Hell and cut everyone into little pieces

Your main weapon is Death's scythe, which can elongate and warp into different shapes, so you can slash, spear and hook your enemies. The handle also turns into a rope for whip attacks. Once you've weakened your opponents, you can then use a button-matching mini-game to kill them for good with a final gory finishing move.



Impaled enemies can be thrown around.



Block attacks to launch a counter move.



Even huge monsters can be brought down.



▲ Not pictured: 200 enemy soldiers over the next hill. The smell of fear. Imminent death.

The Next Big Thing **Format** PS3 **ETA** Autumn **Pub** Codemasters **Dev** Codemasters

Operation Flashpoint Dragon Rising

△ Big ○ War ⊗ Smart □ Enemy

The first thing you notice is how good Flashpoint looks. Bleak, yes, in an Outer Hebrides sort of way, but it actually reminds us of Oblivion: beautiful forests, sweeping open terrain and an environment full of potential that's just waiting to be discovered.

Except unlike Oblivion, this has bombs. Huge, death-from-above-style explosives, such as air strikes that pound the enemy or C4 that makes radar posts disappear with a terrifying "WHUMF!" The combat's alarmingly tense. The simulation-flavoured action means one bullet can be fatal, which encourages a patient and methodical



approach to battles – scoping terrain and issuing orders to a three-man AI squad while furiously improvising as the combat unfolds in completely unscripted battles. The latter is easy though, thanks to a simple circular menu that controls the location, formations and stance of your men. A mission to take out a SAM site, for example, splits into two skirmishes: my men pushing on with the main assault, while I break away to fend off a flanking counter attack, sniping enemies from a rocky outcrop. It's completely unpredictable, and that's what makes Dragon Rising so massively exciting.

Gun list



FGM 148 Javelin
Shoulder-fired guided tank-busting missile.



M107 Light 50
Anti-material rifle used to destroy equipment.



SCAR MOD 0
Assault rifle with grenade launcher.

Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

Vince Kudirka
Associate producer, LucasArts

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves



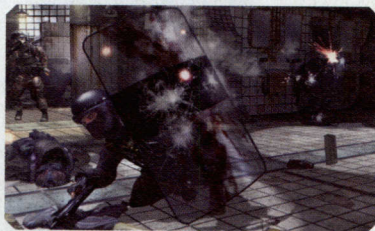
"It's an awesome franchise and a gorgeous game – it looks beautiful. The first one looked great too. They just did a really great job with the action for that; it's a really solid experience."

Brutal Legend

"At first I wasn't sure about this one. I thought it sounded a bit cheesy, but then I saw a trailer and it looked really good. It seems really funny and it's Tim Schafer, plus I like Jack Black."



Modern Warfare 2



"I was a huge Call Of Duty 4 fan – I thought that the multiplayer was awesome. I like playing early and then bowing out – at least I can still beat the computer."

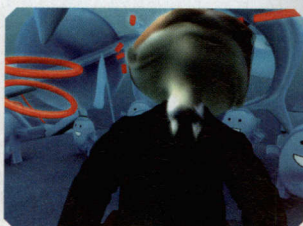
Wtf Detuned

The PSN interactive music video explained



Get arty

Like Linger In Shadow (the PSN demo with the flying dog) Detuned is from the demoscene. That's the weird art-meets-programming world where dev teams create experimental mash-ups to show off their chops. This is from developer .theprodukkt and plays music from your hard drive against a trippy backdrop.



Shape the scene

After picking a tune, the environment and characters respond to your music. Simple changes include colour, visual filters and camera cuts that react to the tempo. You'll be in full control of all this by tilting the Sixaxis to change and warp the music, plus different tunes will have completely different effects.



Watch it unfold

The star of the show is a straight-looking man in a suit. Anything can happen, from his head blowing up like a balloon to suddenly turning into an elephant. While he endures a Kafka nightmare, dancing toys bust moves as other inhabitants, like dolphins and a giant duck, pass by. Probably best not played before bed.



Preview



Hype Magnet **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** Capcom **Dev** Capcom

Lost Planet 2

⬆ Swamps ⬇ Aliens ✕ Mech ◻ Suits

We always knew this sci-fi shoot-'em-up sequel would come to PS3 despite murmurs of it being exclusive to another console. It's finally official. Set ten years after the events of the original, you'll be blasting the alien Akrid in a new, thawed-out world of lush jungles and dirty swamplands. And this time you can do it with your mates. While the first *Lost Planet* limited multiplayer to four competitive modes, its successor is designed for four-man co-op play throughout its campaigns. That means big bosses that require teamwork to kill like a fiery giant salamander, and mech suits that seat more than one player. If you've no actual friends and don't 'do' online, fear not: your partners' roles will be taken by AI bots. You'll be needing their help, too – *Lost Planet 2* is all about big environments and even bigger enemies.

✓ Call him cute and he'll stab you in the eye. Go on, dare ya.



Dark Horse **Format** PS3 **ETA** Autumn **Pub** Eidos **Dev** IO Interactive

Mini Ninjas

⬆ Teeny ⬇ Tiny ✕ Martial ◻ Arts

Small, cute, and fearless in the face of methane-emitting enemies, these pyjama-clad assassins are facing an evil warlord set on world domination. He's building an army by turning animals into soldiers, but in doing so he's upsetting the local ecosystems; causing earthquakes, storms, and all those things Al Gore warned us about. Three ninjas stand in his way, each with their own special skills. Hiro can possess the local

wildlife, Futo likes to pound things with a giant hammer (who doesn't?), and tiny ninjetta Suzume can get enemies dancing as a distraction with a toot on her magic flute. At E3 we saw a giant farting boss (no really) and unusual use of headwear – the ninja's hat can be used as a shield to fend off enemy projectiles, or as a boat or sleigh in travel emergencies. Charming, cheeky and resourceful? Seems good things really do come in small packages.



Quick pitch

Starship troopers

You play as one of a group of soldiers sent in by NEVEC, a corporation hunting out Thermal Energy on the planet EDN III.

Bigger they come...

In the ten years since the original, the enemy Akrid army has grown in numbers and strength.

New look

Customisation lets you change your appearance, weapons, and gestures.



As well as stealth and speed, mini ninja Hiro has Kuji magic on his side.

If the gameplay is as sweet as the visuals, we might let Sonic off for his many, many, many recent sins.



The Next... Super Mario Kart **Format** PS3 **ETA** Spring 2010 **Pub** Sega **Dev** Sumo Digital

Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing

△ He ○ Just × Won't ⊕ Die

A kart racer featuring a host of characters from a time when we were far easier to please than we are now? Feels just a little familiar. But we've spent 20 years green-eyeing Nintendo's Mario Kart series while being fed copycat garbage like Looney Tunes Space Race, so we're hoping developer Sumo Digital can finally strike gold with this new brand of easy-to-handle, power-up-flooded racing. The fact it has successfully delivered OutRun to a modern audience (grab it off PSN and see for yourself) raises that hope.

All-Stars Racing stars the S-Hog and a host of other names of yesteryear in vehicles that fit their personality – a plane for Tails, a banana mobile for Aiai from Super

Monkey Ball, a spiky blue car for Sonic. Otherwise – and this is definitely a good thing – it's *exactly* like Mario Kart, but with a spectacularly vibrant and kitsch makeover. The one track we've seen – called Forgotten Falls (what the legendary Green Hills Zone from the first ever Sonic game would look like if it'd been struck by an earthquake) – features sharp corners, big jumps, and plenty of opportunity for nabbing power-ups like speed boosts, landmines and robotic piranhas that act as homing missiles. While it's only one level, it looks like fantastic fun.

The law of averages says Sonic has to appear in a decent game sooner or later. Please let it be this one – we'll even forgive Sonic Unleashed. Maybe.



Motives What's on Sonic's mind?

Loving England

While Japan keeps messing up Sonic comebacks, UK-based Sumo Digital did okay with Sega Superstars Tennis. Same again, please.

Alliteration mad

His special racing move is called the Super Sonic. Others are Tails' Tornado and Banana Blitz (Aiai). Let's hope they keep Ulala's clean.

Turning a blind eye...

...to the fact that Sonic could go faster if he stepped out of the car and just ran. Maybe he's a little bit tired...

Thank God it's not Sonic R

Or Sonic Riders. Or any Sonic platformer of the last decade. That alone guarantees this at least 6/10.





Preview

Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine

Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub THQ

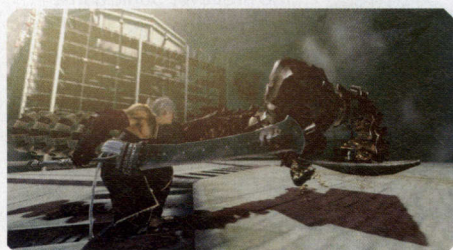
As far as the 12-sided dice botherers on the team go, this is already game of the year. Ditching the strategy flavour of the PC games, this is a balls-out action RPG, with four-man Space Marine squads carving up waves of greenskin scum using their chainswords and bolters. If it's half as fun as it is violent, this will be pure nerd gold.



▲ When the orks are wearing that much armour set the Chainsword to ten.

The latest on...

New shots, new games, new info



Nier

Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub Square Enix

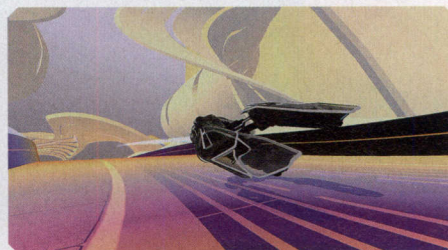
Monsters, a virus (the Black Scrawl) infecting innocents, a mysterious book with hidden powers – if only this God Of War-like actioner had a big muscular hero. What? It does? Cautious yay!



Saw

Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub Konami

The torture-porn tie-in turns Jigsaw's fatal traps into puzzles. Find clues, escape death and, erm, rummage through a toilet full of syringes. Tobin Bell from the films voices Jigsaw. Whoop.



Wipeout HD Fury

Format PSN ETA Summer Pub Sony

This content pack for the beautiful, brilliant PSN racer includes three new modes (including Zone Battle), eight additional tracks and 13 extra ships. Review (probably gushing) next month.



The Beatles: Rock Band

Format PS3 ETA 9 September Pub EA

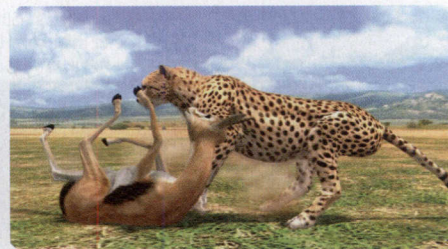
The Fab Four bring '60s-style peripherals, multi-singer harmonies and locations like the Cavern Club and Abbey Road to MTV's music series. But its DLC won't work with RB or RB2. Naughty.



Quantum

Format PS3 ETA Spring 2010 Pub Tecmo

This shooter's big hook is its lock-on cover system. It's similar to Uncharted, but because the game's based in a 'living' tower, scenery constantly shifts – making you think on your feet.



Afrika

Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub Natsume

Sony Japan's pretty, relaxing safari game – where you're a photojournalist who has to snap wild animals – is finally getting an English translation. No, you still can't shoot the gazelles.



Rogue Warrior

Format PS3 ETA September Pub Bethesda

This special ops shooter is pulling out the stops for its Brutal Kill system. New moves include Reassignment – a nasty groin stab – and Field Dressing, where you saw open a man's stomach.



Ruse

Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub Ubisoft

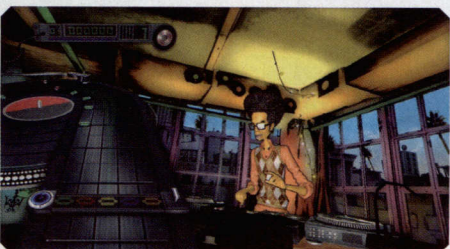
A new take on real-time strategy. The twist this time is lying, and lots of it. Success depends on using camouflage to hide your troops, luring the enemy with decoy units and sneaky sabotage.



IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey

Format PS3 ETA September Pub 505 Games

Our hands-on with the WW2 flight sim proved you can have slick controls without resorting to naff plastic joysticks. Missions cover the Battle of Britain, Stalingrad, Berlin, Sicily and Korsun.



Scratch: The Ultimate DJ

Format PS3 ETA Summer Pub Genius Products

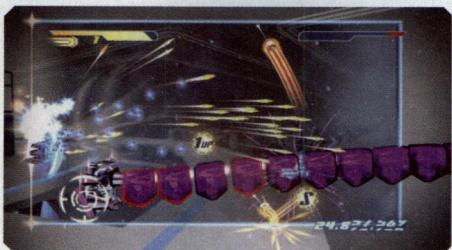
Differentiates itself from Activision's DJ Hero by having drum pads that are used to trigger samples. It's being developed with Beastie Boys' Mix Master Mike, so don't write it off just yet.



Edge Of Twilight

Format PS3 ETA September Pub South Peak

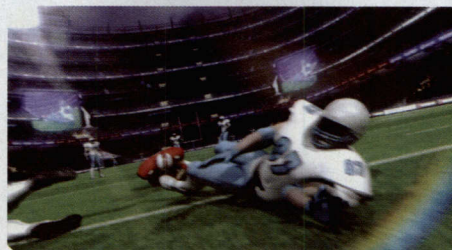
Hack and slash with a steampunk flavour. The world has been split into two realms and, surprise, surprise, there's a bounty hunter called Lex who can jump between them. Handy, that.



Shatter

Format PSN ETA Autumn Pub Sony

Space-themed brick breaker with flashy, fit-inducing looks and Arkanoid-style gameplay. Add the power-ups, boss battles and a thumping soundtrack and this might just be 2009's Stardust.



Backbreaker

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub NaturalMotion

New American footy game that, bizarrely enough, uses the same Euphoria engine as GTA IV. Looks okay(ish), but will a non-NFL Gridiron effort sell? All-Pro Football 2K8's death says, "No."



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles In Time Reshelled

Format PSN ETA Autumn Pub Konami

The 1991 arcade beat-'em-up remains the only credible Turtles game, so we're excited about this smart-looking HD remake. Bagsy Donatello.

Also on the way...

More hard game fact crammed in at the last possible minute

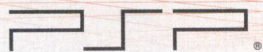
Crytek has confirmed that **Crysis 2** is coming to PS3. It's a sci-fi shooter where you battle aliens in a futuristic nano-suit, and will use the new CryEngine 3 tech. Another confirmed sequel is EA's **Mirror's Edge 2**. No details yet, just the news that a small team is working on it. Modern FPS **Battlefield 3** is in the pipeline too. Or, if you prefer your action small, plastic and yellow, you'll be happy to know **Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues** is due out in the autumn. It'll include the Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull, but the most interesting part is the ability to build your own Lego levels – like LBP, but it really hurts if you step on it with bare feet. One series you won't see a sequel for is **The Godfather II**, as there are no plans for a follow-up. Instead, crime fans could try **Prison Break**, the new game from Brash Entertainment, who made the Jumper adaptation for PS2. Meanwhile **EA Sports MMA**, a new mixed martial arts game, could provide some competition for UFC 2009: Undisputed, but UFC fighter contracts mean those boys won't star in the rival game. Killer 7 director Suda 51 is working on a secret game that will "bankrupt" publisher Marvelous if they make it. Sounds like a winner to us. Finally Tetsuya 'Lumines' Mizuguchi has announced **Project Eden**. Insiders say it's the follow up to cult hit Rez.



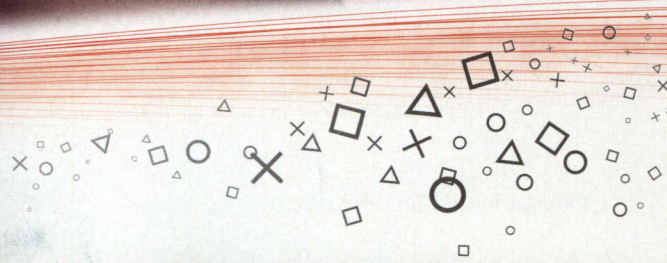
YOUR ENTERTAINMENT. YOUR COLOUR. YOUR PSP.™ YOUR WHOLE WORLD IN YOUR HANDS

The new PSP-3000 colour range is here in Piano Black, Pearl White, Radiant Red, Mystic Silver and the brand new Vibrant Blue. With brighter screens, making your downloads, movies and games look even better, and with wireless internet, hand held gaming has never been so colourful.

Visit summerofpsp.com, and play the Buzz! mini game, for your chance to win a fantastic holiday for you and your family, as well as loads of other prizes.



PlayStation®Portable



UNCHARTED 2



GOD OF WAR III



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves / Gran Turismo 5
Heavy Rain / God Of War III / MAG
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time
The Last Guardian / Modnation Racers
Buzz! Quiz World / PixelJunk Shooter
DC Universe Online / EyePet / The Agency
White Knight Chronicles



RATCHET & CLANK



HEAVY RAIN

PlayStation 3: The new wave



Sony's line-up of exclusive games for the year ahead is the strongest in PlayStation history. Over the next 16 pages, we tell you why...



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Heroes, gold and girls FTW

God, we love Uncharted. We love the adventure, the better-than-you-think-at-first-shooting, that incredible feeling of being out in the open with rushing water and tweeting birds. And, without being shallow, we love how it looks. We always knew Uncharted was pretty, but that's not why we fell for it. Like the guy who lucks out when the kind and generous woman he marries matures into a knockout supermilk, we hooked up with Naughty Dog's awesome adventure because it was engaging and intelligent. Now we're being rewarded by the gods of digital entertainment with visuals that rip the competition to pieces.

Best in show

Certainly, that was the general consensus following Uncharted 2's showing at the recent E3 trade show, where it stood out as the best-looking game at the event – not just of the Sony conference, but the *whole show*. We're biased, sure, but also right. Drake's appearance brought whoops and cheers from what had been a nervous crowd, the treasure hunter dropping in next to a tower overlooking a Peruvian city (where our boy's travelled in his quest for the wish-granting Cintamani Stone). As he grunts and hand-slaps his

**THE
BEST FOR
GRAPHICS**
PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK

Info

ETA September 2009
Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog
We say... By far the best-looking game on show at E3.

The Himalayas make a great place for Drake to practice his climbing skills.



1 Chloe is your new leaner and meaner companion. 2 The multiplayer is ambitious and ace – find out more on p18. 3 This time Drake's after a mythical Buddhist gemstone. 4 The dude in the hat is called Tenzin and helps Drake in Nepal. 5 A typically well thought out Drake encounter.



There's still some jungle action to be had, despite the more mountainous locations found elsewhere.



The first trick to learn if you want to be an adventurer is how to shoot while hanging on precariously by your fingertips.

way up the tower, the camera swings to reveal a swooning view of the incredibly detailed city below: tiled roofs piled on crumbling slums, bordered by lush green forest. When Drake clambers onto the rooftop, a range of imposing, snow-capped mountains is finally revealed.

In showman's terms, this wasn't so much pulling a rabbit from a hat as a chainsaw-juggling panther – *Among Thieves* is beautiful, and in a more varied and impressive way than the gorgeous but (whisper it) dull-toned palette of games like *Call Of Duty* and *Killzone 2*. Drake follows new companion Chloe (tougher and more Australian than returning partner Elena) down a zip-line into the city, where they're immediately set upon by the whirring machine guns of an attack chopper. Rasping tracer fire shreds everything – wooden beams and precarious balconies – as the pair escape, only to be ambushed by soldiers.

The cover and shooting of the ensuing gunfight look very similar to the first *Uncharted*, with an easy, swinging camera as Drake, the blustering hero, skids into cover and flinches as he blindfires. But the stakes have clearly been upped dramatically, and the sense of scale and spectacle is unlike anything the original had to offer. If the first game was a matinee adventure, this is a summer blockbuster.

Drake's progress

Not that any of this has changed Drake himself. Crucially, he's still the same smirking, reluctant hero we left behind two years ago. At one point his mysterious but melodramatic Peruvian guide Tenzin begins to talk, "Imagine the power of..." before Drake effortlessly undercuts him with the incredulous one-liner, "Where did you find this guy?" The same could go for Drake himself – he's an absolute gift to PS3, and this is one sequel that can't come round soon enough.



Sony speak



New Sony Computer Entertainment Europe CEO
Andrew House

There's been a lot of emphasis on the battle between consoles. How do you think Sony did at E3?

I was really pleased with our presentation. We struck the right balance between being future facing – new motion controller technology, good information about the network and how that's going to evolve – and a solid game line-up. It's probably the strongest line-up I've ever seen between first and third-party.

If it wasn't for the leak, *The Last Guardian* would have been game of the show. Were you disappointed?

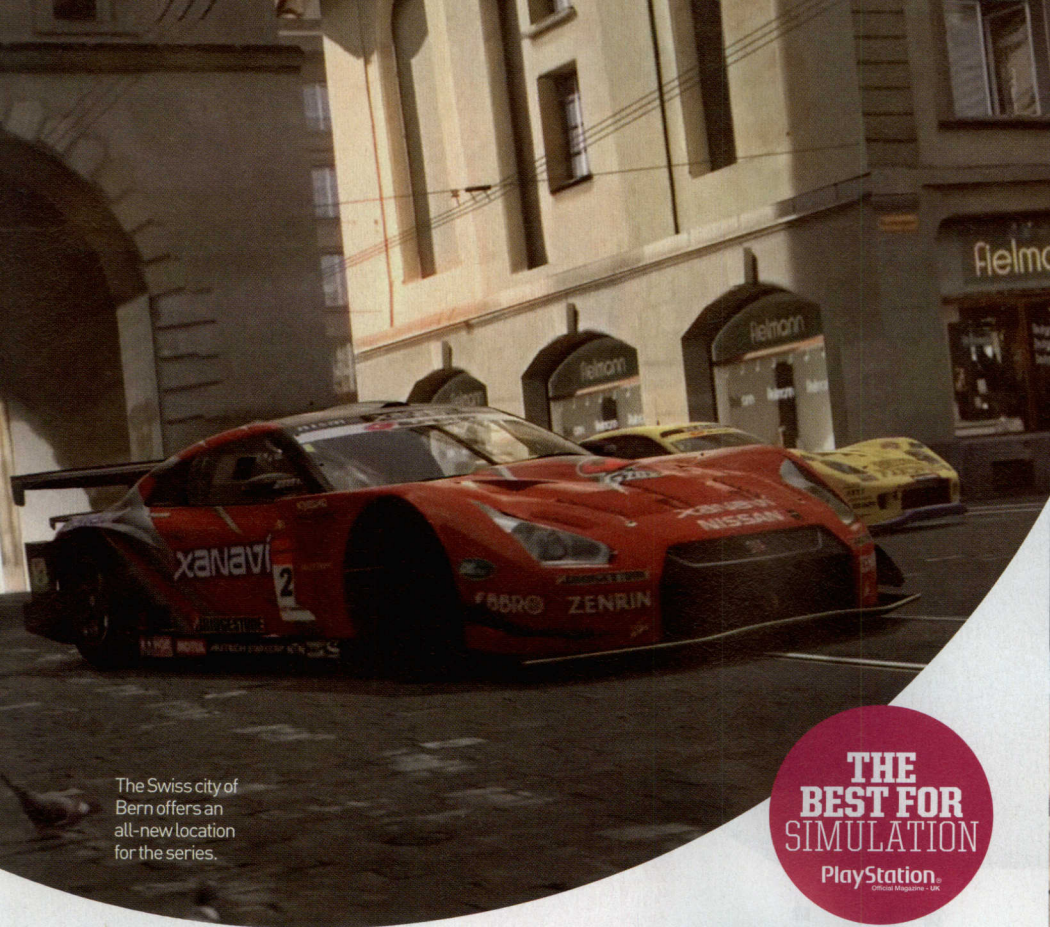
No. I think we can get too obsessed with leaked information. The point is that the game is the game, and people are going to get excited. Obviously I'd like to have big surprises. We did keep a few up our sleeves. In an ideal world there would have been more!

Can you give an overview of your vision for PlayStation in Europe?

It would be arrogant to come in and say there's a need for wholesale change. I come from a brand marketing background, so you'll see renewed focus on the PlayStation brand in Europe. I'm intrigued by the possibilities in the network space, that's very exciting.

Europe often seems to get things last, or pay more compared to Japan or the US. What's your message to PlayStation fans?

I challenge the assumption strongly that Sony has viewed Europe in a different way. The secret of Sony's success, and something that I'm very proud to be a part of, is that we were the first company that took the European market seriously. We've always looked to balance the global approach to business with a deep knowledge of what consumers want locally. It's a tradition that I intend to continue and improve on.

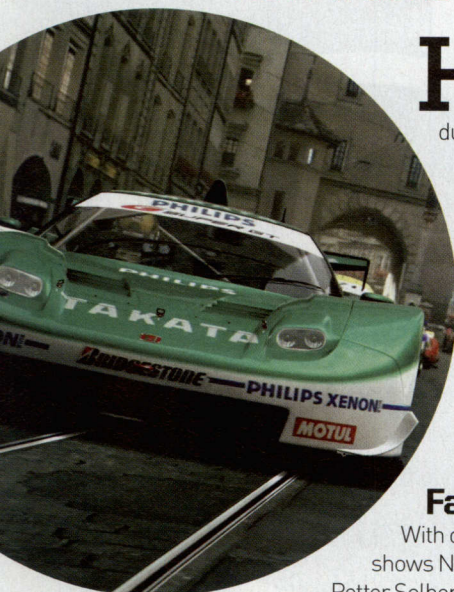


The Swiss city of Bern offers an all-new location for the series.

THE
BEST FOR
SIMULATION
PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Gran Turismo 5

New tracks, races and - yes! - damage



Expect even more realistic physics than Prologue offered and heaps more content.

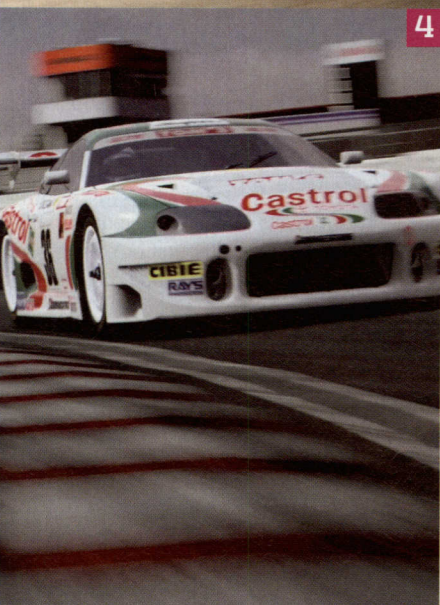
Huge news: two officially licensed motorsport championships will be included in Gran Turismo 5. NASCAR has developed something of a bad rep as dull oval racing in its EA outings, but as a bit of American colour in a broader racing game – and with Kazunori Yamauchi's eye for simulation-grade detail – it should offer a tasty and challenging morsel. (The EA series is dead, by the way. No tears here either.)

The inclusion of the World Rally Championship is a more Euro-centric decision, and will have forced a rethink of GT4's slightly shonky gravel physics. The emphasis on traditional rally values might also Hoover up some of the classic Colin McRae crowd. Especially those players who found that series' recent shift to extreme sports distasteful.

Famous faces

With official licences come real personalities – the latest teaser shows NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon and 2003 WRC champion Petter Solberg, suggesting that actual racing drivers will be making an appearance for the first time in the series. Whether there'll be genuine rivalry on the track remains to be seen, but the stars of the sport should help combat the sterility GT has sometimes been accused of. The other big revelation, demonstrated by a Subaru Impreza with loosened bodywork, was that damage would *finally* be included – something that fans have been asking for since time immemorial.

And the best part? Rumblings that we could see Gran Turismo 5 released before Christmas. Yamauchi has said that the game is all but ready and is only being held up by his and Polyphony Digital's meticulous perfectionism. Let's hope he's satisfied soon.



1 Hopefully, gravel handling will be more precise than GT4. 2 NASCAR in all its low-tech yet over-the-top glory. 3 Four-wheel drive and a turbo equals a ton of fun. 4 Online racing will be changed to enable private, crash-free races. 5 The hypnotically challenging Nürburgring returns.

Info

ETA December 2009
Pub Sony
Dev Polyphony Digital
We say... It's taken its time but it looks worth the wait.

To kill or not to kill?
You get to choose the
fate of the villains
and the heroes.

THE
BEST FOR
INNOVATION
PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Heavy Rain

You control the lady in red

The distinctive filmic adventure from Quantic Dream continues to look special. CEO David Cage confirmed it'll be made up of 60-or-so 15-minute set-pieces, and the storyline is entirely shaped by what you do with the four playable characters. If any die, the narrative continues on without them. Cage suggests that to keep the experience unique you finish it once "and maybe never play it again". Yeah, that's so not happening.

Unbuttoned with buttons

The first scene we saw involved lead lady Madison Paige sexing herself up in order to tease a sleazebag into giving her info on antagonist the Origami Killer. It's up to you exactly how far she goes as she stands in front of a bathroom mirror. Onscreen symbols correspond naturally to movements of the right stick: ↓ makes her grab her skirt (then tear sections off by shaking the DualShock), ↑↖↗ commands her to show more cleavage, and → sees her open her make-up bag in order to apply eye shadow or lipply.

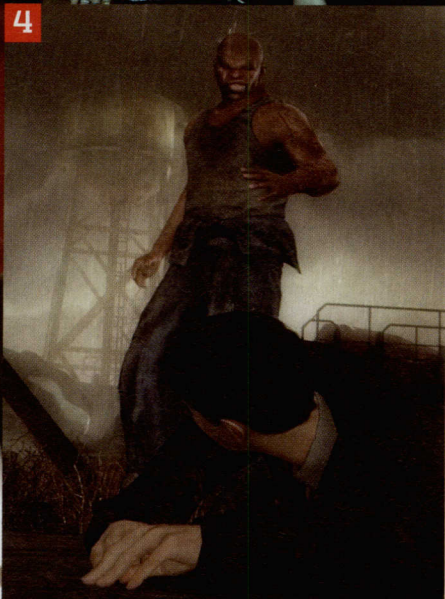
It's a little pretentious, but there's a superficial pleasure to it. Plus, there's plenty of scope for exploring and fighting elsewhere. This was evident as we went hands-on with drug addict FBI agent Norman Jayden, searching a junkyard for a car linked to one of the Origami Killer's murders. The scene mixed button-matching moments during a fight with a thug, and personal choices, such as whether to interrogate with conversation or brute force. The cleverest part was hitting buttons in odd combinations in order to stay composed as withdrawal symptoms kick in – the idea being that your confusion mimics his. Very good.

Info

ETA Spring 2010
Pub Sony
Dev Quantic Dream
We say... It will be great if it doesn't end up getting lost up its own backside.



There's no doubting Heavy Rain's graphical prowess – journo-lass Madison looks downright sensational.



1 FBI agent Norman tries to look cool. Fails. 2 What happens if you choose to unbutton Madison. 3 This scene ends with Madison stripping to a bra and thong at gun point. 4 Reactions are key to winning a fight. 5 The Advanced Reality Interface tech enables Norman to easily spot evidence.



Sony speak



Sony
Worldwide
Studios
president
**Shuhei
Yoshida**

How does your motion control compare to Microsoft's Natal?

I think they're trying to continue on the path we began with EyeToy. However, we know that just using the camera without precisely detecting what the consumer wants to do – with buttons and triggers – is difficult. So while it's interesting, what we're providing is very different.

Might the controller be used alongside the DualShock?

Technically, it's totally doable. We're working with the group in Tokyo to make such things simple and understandable.

Jack Tretton spoke of games "only possible on PlayStation". How would you characterise these?

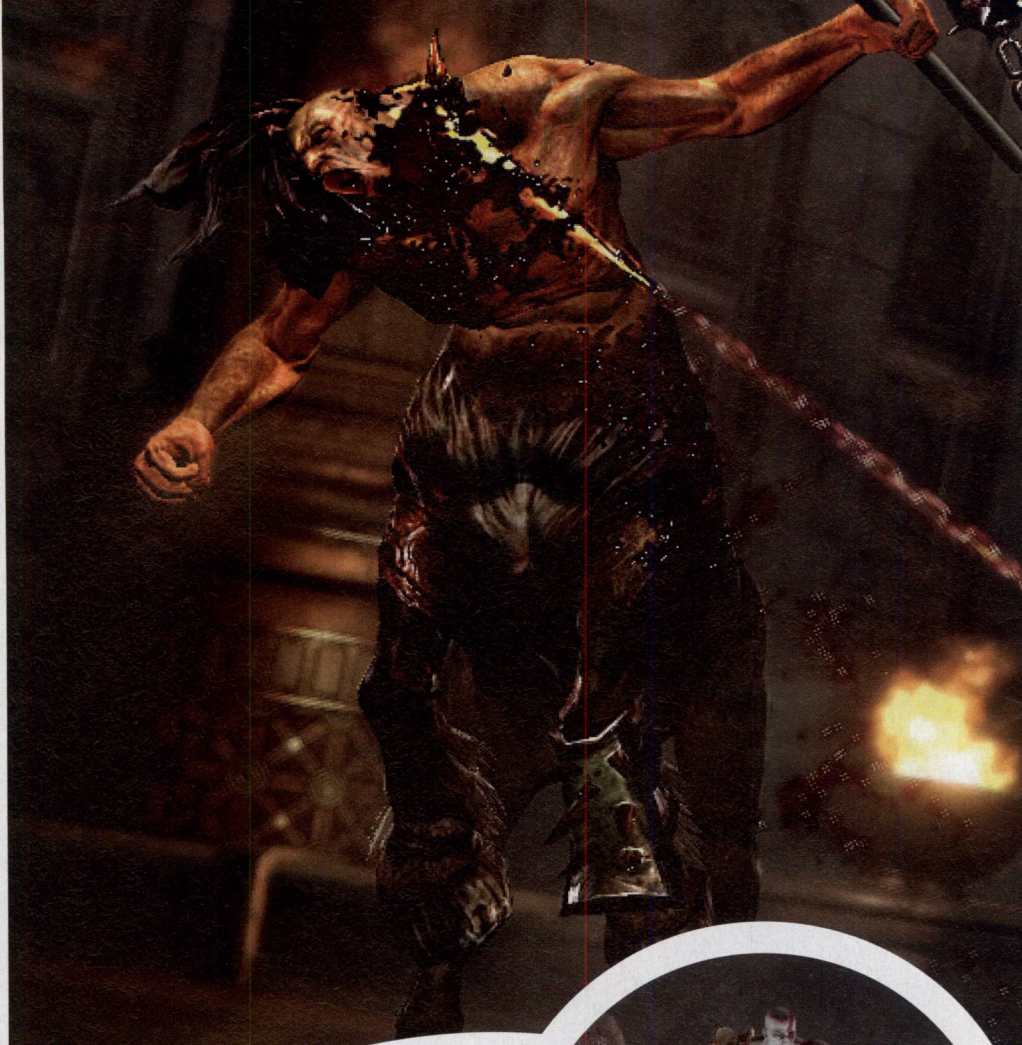
Developers are more comfortable with the hardware, and they're finding the more they develop for PS3, the more they're finding untapped power. I think this year you'll see more things on PS3 where you'll have to think hard about whether it's possible on other platforms.

Do you see a gap emerging between first-party and multiplatform titles?

The way I understand it, the multiplatform providers have specific engineering teams for each platform. And engineers working specifically on PS3 are finding the same thing as our internal teams. It's more a business decision whether a publisher allows versions of a game to be different.

Is there enough extra power for a ten-year life cycle?

The platform, firmware and software are evolving, so teams in Tokyo and the US are adding features and making more memory available. It's enabling developers to incorporate more interesting network features, for example. The more code they move to the SPUs, the easier they find computing-intensive tasks, such as AI and particle effects, on PS3. You'll see more and more interesting character behaviours and unique graphics that are only possible using the power of Cell.



The Chimera is part snake, part goat and part lion. None of them like you.





The good news is that the big red guy is on your side so he won't mean to kill you. You might just get in the way.

067

God Of War III

Best eviscerated liver. *Evar!*

A quick glance at God Of War III and you'll think little has changed. The usual elements are all there – pain, blood, pointy things shoved into tender places. But peer closer and you'll see just how sharp it all looks. The new level of detail means you can zoom in closer than ever before, while still seeing every gory little touch. Pull a cyclops' eye out and the view closes right in as the optic nerve strains, stretches and breaks. It's sort of horrific, but in a way that makes you nod and say, "Cool." It's definitely the messiest GOW yet. At one point, centaurs are gutted while Greek god Helios has his head ripped off by the Spartan. Not cut, *ripped*.

Hack and slash

The combat is largely unchanged (although new Greek knuckle dusters, the Cestus, mean Kratos can now pound as well as slice) but the camera soars around the action creating a far more dynamic sense of pace – pulling in tightly to reveal a new threat or pulling away to give a sweeping sense of scale to the chaos as you carve through enemies. It makes the last two games look like a dress rehearsal. This is the real deal.

THE
BEST FOR
GORE
PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK

Info

ETA March 2010
Pub Sony
Dev Sony Santa Monica
We say... It's the best-looking and bloodiest GOW yet.

That might look like a big fight, but it's only a fraction of the 256-player action on offer in MAG.



068

MAG

You and whose... oh, them

E3 proved this ambitious shooter – 256 people online, in one game – works. Of course, if it's 256 idiots running around with the safety off it'll be chaos. But Zipper Interactive has a plan. By offering XP bonuses for completing objectives you'll be encouraged to follow orders. Stick to the plan, bank the points, and you'll rise up the ranks, earning the right to command other players. You can go rogue if you want, it's just a career dead-end.

You da boss

This idea of hierarchy is crucial. The huge numbers are broken down into eight-man squads, four-squad platoons and so on. As you progress up the ranks, you'll take control of larger groups. Orders are issued through an in-game interface that picks out set objectives on the map and feeds into other team's goals, so that whatever happens, everyone's working towards same goal: defeating the enemy.

The action plays out like a standard multiplayer shooter. Squads have objectives to complete, such as taking out bunkers or chopper landing pads. Completing these then gives you tactical advantages, such as pushing your team's spawn point forwards, or forcing the enemy back. Drivable vehicles including APCs and helicopters can be used to back you up while UAV drones scout ahead and air strikes flatten resistance. Got to love those air strikes.

**THE
BEST FOR
MULTIPLAYER**
PlayStation
Official Magazine UK

Info

ETA Winter
Pub Sony
Dev Zipper
Interactive
We say... A huge FPS
that could change
online gaming forever.



❑ MAG's factions, from left to right: the techy Raven, the rag-tag SVER, and the almost normal Valor.



1 Vehicles provide a fast, safe[ish] way to get into battle. 2 Choppers offer reconnaissance and air support. 3 It's all about teamwork, going solo won't get you anywhere. 4 Combining units with good team play is the way to succeed. 5 The map keeps track of every objective and soldier.



Krell Canyon demonstrates a more open level design, with multiple routes instead of linear missions.



070

Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time

PS3's deadliest/cutest hero is back

There are three things we want from a new Ratchet & Clank: mental weapons, beautiful locations and clever gameplay. What we've seen ticks everything off the list. Our latest look revealed Krell Canyon, a stunning, colourful, platform-filled landscape full of OTT machines, robots and enemies, such as the brutish new Agoreans. Two weapons also made their debut – the Sonic Eruptor, a small monster that emits shotgun-like blasts of sound, and the Omni-soaker, which sucks up plant nectar and squirts it out to attract swarming insects. And Ratchet demonstrated new hover boots as he raced along tracks and jumped ramps.

Friend in need

The story continues Ratchet's search for Clank, aided by a new character called General Alister Azimuth – a Lombax like our furry hero. Together they battle returning robo-villain Doctor Nefarious. Clank is back, bringing with him fresh time travel abilities that enable him to solve puzzles using past and future versions of himself – pressing switches to hold a door open, say. Best of all though, not only does hapless coward and comedy gold Captain Qwark appear, but Insomniac is promising he'll get a bigger role this time.



Info

ETA Autumn 2009
Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac
We say... Bright, beautiful and packing more heat than the sun.

**THE
BEST FOR
ADVENTURE**
PlayStation.
Official Magazine UK

New location Krell appears to be an industrial planet populated by robots.



❑ Playing as Clank will enable you to travel in time and help yourself out when solving puzzles.



1 The fresh-faced hero wears Ico-styled clothes. 2 Stealth forms part of the gameplay. 3 As the boy sleeps, the creature keeps watch. 4 The journey ahead. 5 It may be big, but it doesn't like being abandoned. "Stay, Mr Fluffy. Stay!"





▣ You need to work with your new feathered friend. Whether on land or underwater, teamwork is crucial.

THE
BEST FOR
EMOTION
PlayStation
Official Magazine UK

The Last Guardian

Can we keep him, mum?

We've watched the trailer a hundred times and are now more excited than ever by Team Ico's latest project, which focuses on the relationship between a small boy and a strange creature (The Japanese name translates as 'sea-eagle') as they try to escape a tumble-down set of ruins. Director Fumito Ueda says that as the mini-hero you'll have to care for the game's bird/dog/cat star by feeding it and pulling arrows and spears from its feathery coat. The creature even responds to different types of touch.

Obedience school

In return for your attention, the creature will help the boy explore and fight enemies. You can ride it to reach new areas and also use it to crunch up crates to get at what's inside. You'll have to coax it, though, to get the responses you need – throwing a barrel so the noise attracts it to a certain area, perhaps. Players will also need to make it stay put when they look around, rather than running ahead. We're not sure how you make something that big 'stay', but we're guessing it involves food. Lots of food. Perfectly trained or not, all we know is that we really, really want one.

Info

ETA 2010
Pub Sony
Dev Team Ico
We say... Stunning, soulful and epic. This game is love at first sight.



You can customise your racer and car however you want. We call this guy Pinhead Jr.

074

Modnation Racers

It's LittleBigKarts. With monkeys!



▲ The handling is tight and arcadey – perfect for competition between friends.

Info

ETA 2010
Pub Sony
Dev United Front Games
We say... An innovative, creative racing game.

Jumping on the user-generated bandwagon and forming part of Sony's 'Play, Create and Share' initiative is Modnation Racers. As with LittleBigPlanet, it's all about making your own stuff – cars, drivers and tracks – which can then be shared through PSN for others to race/enjoy/slate.

It looks easy, too. In footage we saw, a fully decorated track was produced from scratch and raced in minutes. Circuits are built by driving around the landscape, laying a trail of Tarmac as you go. Completing the loop builds a basic track you can then test immediately against AI opponents. Shaping the landscape is just as accessible, with hills, mountains and water painted on the environment from a palette of textures and surfaces. Similarly, you can pepper the circuit with road cones, sheep and weapons by selecting and dropping them wherever you want.

Track record

Even at this stage of development, the creation system looks powerful but accessible, and should be an instant hit with racing fans. While limited to cartoon-style racing, it's easy to see a LittleBigPlanet-style community growing around the creation and sharing of tracks. The clock's already ticking on powersliding through an enormous asphalt penis, carefully rendered in hairpins and chicanes. Thriving community or not, Modnation Racers will stand or fall on its gameplay. The handling and feel of the cars has got to be perfect to make racing fun, regardless of how incredible the tracks are. Still, with a 2010 release planned, we can be confident that developer United Front will nail the fundamentals with time to spare.



1 Racing mixes driving skill and combat.
2 Track creation uses simple controls to draw roads and landscapes.
3 You can upload and share anything you create.
4 Pull tricks for bonus points.
5 There are loads of customisation options.



DC Universe Online

ETA 2010 Pub Sony Dev Sony Online Austin

The latest mission revealed in this comic MMO involves a zombie-like disease outbreak at STAR labs. As a hero you work with Batman to cure the infected. While as a villain you team up with The Joker to fit mind control collars on the victims and make them slaves. Success awards you with Encounter Loot – gadgets that enhance your powers.

Buzz! Quiz World

ETA Winter Pub Sony Dev Relentless Software

Now with PS Eye support, to snatch pictures of you totally failing to remember who the President of Paraguay is. There are 5,000 new questions in all, rounds that include a gunge tank and the ability to create your own games by selecting round types and topics. Plus there are hundreds of player names to choose from, so that Buzz can insult you personally.



PixelJunk Shooter

ETA Winter Pub Sony Dev Q-Games

Pilot your ship through caverns while trying to rescue people. It's as much a puzzler as it is a shooter; blasting away barriers releases water and lava that interact – one sets into rock, the other evaporates, depending on the amounts that come together. You'll also incinerate or drown the people you're there to save if you're not careful, so be sure to think before you shoot.

EyePet

ETA Winter Pub Sony Dev Sony London

The latest tech revealed for this interactive pet is a card read by the PS Eye. Hold it up and onscreen it turns into things like trampolines, bubble machines or even an X-ray scanner. Not that you need it: EyePet will happily chase anything you drag around the floor, or roll over to have its tummy rubbed. Could this mean never having to say "Buster's with the angels now" again?



The Agency

ETA 2010 Pub Sony Dev Sony Online Seattle

Two key skills to master in this secret agent MMO are your Outfits and Agents. As well as the Role Outfits that define your class, you have Alias Outfits to blend in to different situations unnoticed. You also unlock more than 400 Agents that can be equipped like power-ups and perform functions such as building weapons, sniping enemies to protect you or opening locked doors.



White Knight Chronicles

ETA December Pub Sony Dev Level-5

Classic RPG fayre as village nobody Leonard suddenly becomes saviour of a medieval fantasy kingdom. To help him, he has a magic glove that turns him into a 70-foot-tall knight. Think ye olde Power Rangers as you morph to battle giant monsters. The partially turn-based combat uses timing bars that must fill before you can execute moves chosen from a completely customisable palette of attacks.



And then there's this...

Smaller, lighter and designed for a bright new digital future – **PSPgo** is here

**THE
BEST FOR
TECH**
PlayStation
Official Magazine UK

076

Press leaks meant that it was far from E3's best-kept secret, but that doesn't make PSPgo any less exciting. Focusing on digital downloads, it's swapped out UMDs for 16GB of built-in memory to store masses of PSN content. That includes all-new exclusive-to-PSP instalments of Resident Evil (more on that next month) and Metal Gear Solid, thousands of downloadable TV shows and films, plus iPhone-style apps. Don't worry if the £250 (£212) price feels a tad steep – you can stick with your old PSP while you're saving, as Sony will continue to produce and support both PSP-3000 and UMDs. So whichever model you're rocking, you win.

Info

ETA October
Model PSP-N1000
Price £250
We say... A sleek and brilliantly designed must-have gadget. We want one now!

Actual size

128mm



3.8" screen

It's slightly smaller than the original machine's 4.3" and much closer to the iPhone's 3.5" size. It still boasts the original 480x272 pixel resolution, though, which means it'll create a sharper picture than ever before.

Bluetooth

This joins USB and WiFi as a way of linking wirelessly to other devices. You'll now be able to use Bluetooth headsets or connect to mobile phones and other PSPgos to communicate or transfer media.

16GB of internal Flash memory

This replaces the UMD drive and stores all the games, music and video you'll be downloading. You can add up to 16GB more with a Memory Stick Micro.

Weight

The lack of a UMD drive, smaller components and a more economical design overall means PSPgo is nearly half the weight of PSP-3000 (45% lighter, to be exact). So it weighs in at a little over 5oz.

New look

The sliding design has subtly moved the buttons, the biggest benefit being that the analog nub has been slightly repositioned, making it more comfortable to use. So there'll be no more shooting wrist pains during long sessions.

Battery power

The official word on battery life is that it's "equivalent to the current models", despite it being a smaller, embedded type (you can't take it out). Size has reduced, but no moving parts means lower power demands, hence the comparable lifespan.



PSPgo Specs

Weight Approx 158g/5.6oz (including internal battery)
CPU PSP CPU (System clock frequency 1.333MHz, main memory 64MB)
Display 3.8" (16:9) full-transparent type, TFT drive, 480x272 pixel, 16,770,000 colours displayed (approx)

- Built-in stereo speakers
- Built-in microphone
- High-speed USB (USB2.0)
- Memory Stick Micro (M2)
- Analogue video out
- (DC IN / OUT, USB, video output / input, sound input / output)
- Headset / microphone connector
- Memory Stick Micro slot
- Lithium-Ion rechargeable internal battery pack
- AC adaptor
- USB power supply
- 16GB (Flash memory)
- Wireless LAN (IEEE 802.11b) (WiFi)
- Infrastructure mode / Ad hoc mode (connect up to 16 consoles)
- Bluetooth 2.0 (EDR)

PSPgo's killer games

The must-play titles coming soon to your handheld



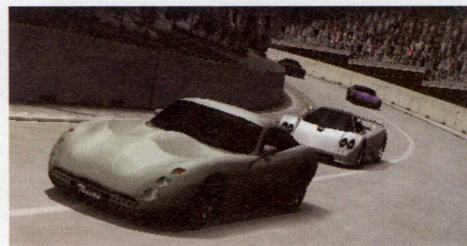
- 1 Multiple Snakes working together suggests co-op play.
 2 The level of in-game detail is incredible.
 3 It looks like MGS3's Russian forces are causing trouble again.



Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker

ETA 2010 Pub Konami Dev Kojima Productions

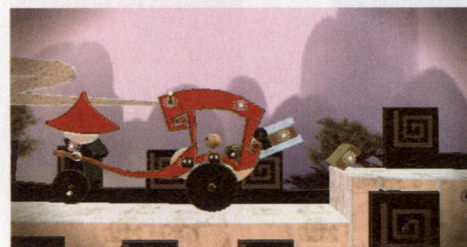
Set in 1974, two years after Portable Ops, this follows Naked Snake/Big Boss and his guerrilla military group, Militaires Sans Frontieres (who eventually go on to form Outer Heaven). It looks very similar to MGS3: Snake Eater, as you fight in South America using new gadgets, including a balloon that sends unconscious guards skywards. Described by Hideo Kojima as the "Metal Gear Solid 5 inside me", he'll be writing, producing and directing this instalment, making it the true sequel to MGS4 and a big deal on PSP.



Gran Turismo

ETA October Pub Sony Dev Polyphony Digital

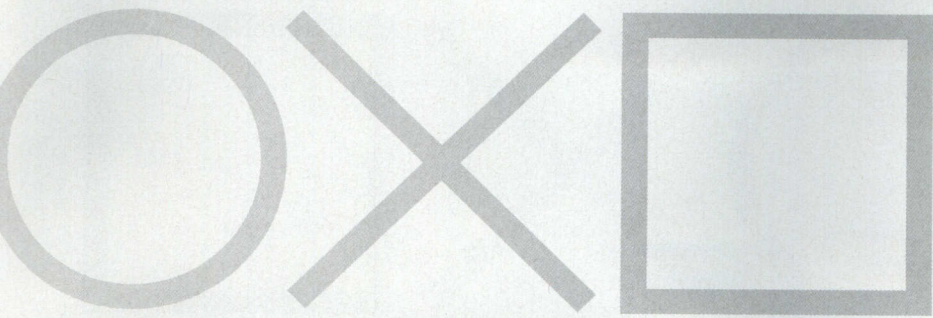
Somehow, this manages to cram the core of GT's impressively obsessive brand of driving sim onto PSP. You'll get 800 cars, 35 tracks (with well over 60 layouts) to enjoy in both single and multiplayer races, as well as Mission Challenge – which tests your skill through a range of driving trials. You can also save replays and download ghost cars to compete against. Tuning options will be reduced to a Quick Tune mode where you'll be able to adjust suspension values or play with traction control, tyres and so on. You won't have the choice to swap or replace parts, though. According to producer Kazunori Yamauchi, that's more to do with making the game playable and accessible on PSPgo's screen, rather than cutting anything.



LittleBigPlanet

ETA October Pub Sony Dev Sony Studio Cambridge

If anything proves what PSP can do, it's this. Incredibly, it manages to pack in almost all of the original's features, enabling you to create and build with all the same tools – including switches and motors – as well as share creations online. There's also a new single-player adventure. There's no info on that yet, but it'll likely be part-story, part-tutorial, as in the first game. The only real changes are that everything now works on two, rather than three, perspective planes and the facial expressions have been replaced by full body animations – like dancing – which are easier to see.



Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines

ETA November Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Montreal

This bridges the gap between the first game and its imminent sequel, explaining the link between Altair and new Mr Stabby, Ezio. It looks amazing, too, with the ancient Holy Lands appearing equally as epic and beautiful, just further away. The free-running and climbing will be back as well, with Altair hopping and vaulting across roofs in search of victims. You'll also be able to link the PSP version with its PS3 counterpart, so as you unlock new health and weapon upgrades in Assassin's Creed II, they'll be added to your armoury in Bloodlines.



History

The evolution of Sony's handheld



PSP (2004)

Initially announced in 2003, the original concept images lacked the analog nub, which later appeared when it was revealed at E3 2004. It was launched that year in Japan and followed in America and Europe a year later.



PSP Slim & Lite (2007)

The second generation PSP was 33% lighter and nearly 5mm thinner. It achieved this by ditching an internal metal chassis and using a simpler UMD hatch. It also included a new video out port and doubled the internal RAM.



PSP-3000 (2008)

The main change here was a massively overhauled screen with improved contrast and colour range, plus anti-reflective technology to make it more usable outdoors. It also incorporated a built-in microphone.



PSPgo (2009)

Model number PSP-N1000 is a complete redesign, built around a sliding-case structure. The focus on digital downloads means the old UMD drive has now been replaced with an impressive 16GB of built-in storage.



- 1 Jak's new gunstaff turns into a variety of different weapons.
- 2 Aerial combat sees you battle sky pirates and huge Capital Ships.
- 3 You can play Critical missions for the story or optional ones to collect upgrades.

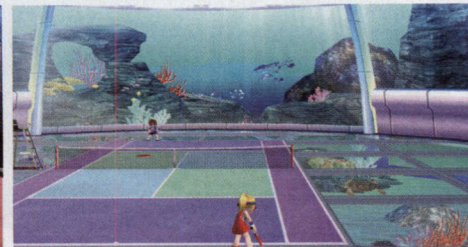
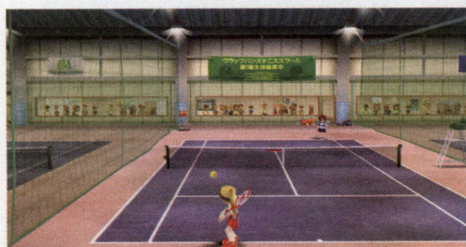
Jak And Daxter: The Last Frontier ETA Autumn Pub Sony Dev High Impact Games

Jak and loudmouthed sidekick Daxter the ottsel (an otter/weasel hybrid) are back to put in their bid for the PSP platforming crown. Picking up after Jak 3 (but before Jak X: Combat Racing), the duo must save the world from a shortage of Eco, the magical energy that gives Jak his powers. It also upgrades Jak's new gadget, a gunstaff that's both a shooter and a melee weapon. Air combat now plays a huge part, as you battle sky pirates, customising up to five different planes for maximum ass-kicking potential.



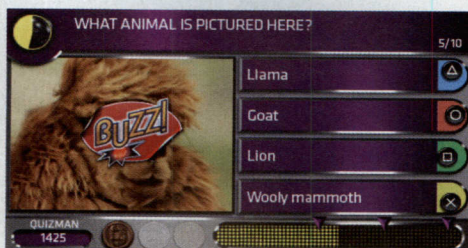
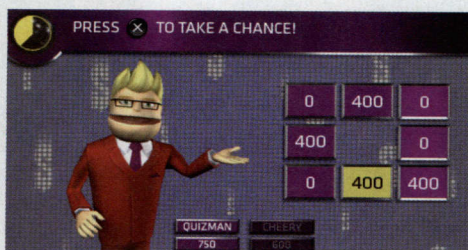
Army Of Two: The 40th Day ETA Winter Pub EA Dev EA Montreal

A slightly different offering to the PS3 version, this distils the co-op adventure into a stylish top-down shooter. You'll still blast a hell of a lot of men and follow the plot of the main game – which sees the duo fighting to survive in a disaster-struck Shanghai – you'll just do it from a slightly different angle. Our latest look had Rios and Salem running down the side of a toppled skyscraper, dodging rockets before taking out a chopper. There's still plenty of bromance and you'll need to patch up your fallen buddy if he goes down during a fight. Plus, if you don't trust an AI partner, you can hook up with a friend and fight the enemy together. Manly hugs and arm punching optional.



Hot Shots Tennis PSP ETA Autumn Pub Sony Dev Clap Hanz

Who needs Anna Kournikova when you have anime girls showing off their backhand in undersea glass courts as turtles paddle past? This cartoonish contender ditches celebrities in favour of customisable characters, collectibles, unlockables and crazy courts to play on. You might recognise the Hot Shots name from 2008's brilliant golf game, which is why this could be a worthy rival to the Virtua Tennis series. Don't let the looks fool you either; the world might be cute but the gameplay's ruthlessly addictive, creating viciously competitive matches. Hook up with a few friends and you can enjoy up to four-player doubles or just go it alone with single-player tournaments and challenges.



Buzz! Quiz World

ETA Winter Pub Sony Dev Relentless Software

There are a massive 3,000 new questions in this improved PSP edition, and general knowledge fans can access even more through expansion packs that will be available on PSN. Compete with four people online, or play a Pass Around game with one PSP and six people.



Motorstorm: Arctic Edge

ETA October Pub Sony Dev Bigbig Studios

This time the carnage moves to Alaska, where you can race new vehicles, including Snowcats and Skidoos, across 12 mountain tracks in solo and eight-man online events. The snow's not just for looks – it can be used to cool your boost ability or bury rivals in huge avalanches.



Invizimals

ETA October Pub Sony Dev Novarama

Think augmented-reality Pokemon. Plug in a Go!Cam and point it at objects to reveal different magical creatures based on textures or even time. Capture them using a star-shaped trap and you can train them to fight using button presses or hand gestures in front of the camera.



SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 3

ETA Winter Pub Sony Dev Slant Six Games

Play Sony's long-running squad shooter the old way – issuing orders to an AI team – or grab three mates and save the world through the power of co-op. Earning in-game points also enables you to buy and customise new guns. Laser sight and grenade launcher? Oh, go on then.

FAQ

What else can it do?

What's Media Go?

It's the shiny new version of the old Media Manager software, and it enables you to transfer games, videos, photos of your dog and music between your PC and PSP. Even better, it'll be a free download.

What videos are there?

Sony has signed deals with loads of TV, film and sports companies. So you'll have access to everything from UFC to the latest movies, with flicks like Righteous Kill, Zack And Miri Make A Porno and Twilight confirmed so far. TV content includes shows such as Dexter and The Soup. In total there'll be 1,900 movies and 9,400 TV episodes. The bad news? It's only confirmed for the US so far. Fingers crossed it reaches us.

What about other downloads?

Sony is doing little to deny that iPhone-style apps are coming and will be announced at August's Gamescon, in Cologne. Think instant messenger programs and interactive maps.

What about all my old UMD games?

Sony's John Koller, the director of hardware marketing, has said there will be a good-will system in place where PSP owners who upgrade to PSPgo will be able to download digital versions of their current UMDs. It's unclear how it will work or which games will qualify, but at least this means you won't have to worry about replacing your entire library.

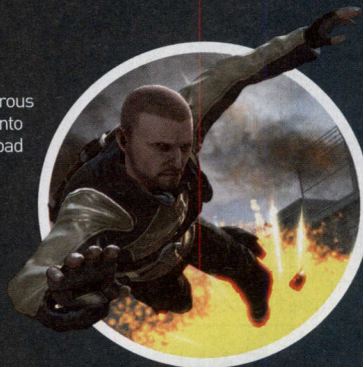


▲ Your electrical powers give inFamous a shooter-like feel.

2 Gameplay

inFamous' best trick is to keep the gameplay varied. Spy drones to shoot down, hostages to rescue, gang hideouts to storm - each new mission is a surprise. Side quests repeat but offer tangible rewards like restoring power to suburbs or clearing areas of enemies. Not much is happening elsewhere, though, and you'll find little action on the streets outside of the set missions.

► Cole's superpowered life involves numerous decisions, all tied into the game's good/bad Karma system.



1 Story

Like a heavy night out, this is a tale of angry girlfriends and blackouts. Half of Empire City has been destroyed and Cole McGrath is apparently to blame, despite having no memory of how. Missions mainly involve pulling odd jobs in return for info, with the city growing to admire or fear you, depending on how you behave. The aim is to find the device responsible for the carnage and the people who set it off, while trying to relight a flame with your lady, Trish.



► Using just his bare fists, Alex is a lethal killing machine.



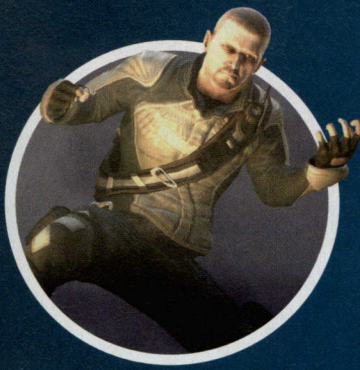
inFamous

What happens when PS3's spectacularly superpowered rivals go head-to-head?



1 Story

Investigating main man Alex Mercer's amnesiac past lifts the skirt on biological experiments, military cover-ups and a city collapsing into anarchy as a mutating virus destroys Manhattan. The plot can feel thin and it's easy to forget why you're doing anything. Especially with the Web Of Intrigue, a confusing network of background info collected from random people.



3 Powers

The range of electrical abilities isn't huge but feels essential and endlessly rewarding. It's a shooter at heart, with sparky takes on RPGs and grenades to back up basic lighting blasts. Cole's nimble too - scaling any surface and grinding cables at speed, launching into the air and gliding over rooftops using Electrostatic Thrusters. You'll have to play through twice too, as the good/evil powers are different enough to warrant another go.

4 Graphics

The world is big, bright and comic-book solid while the glow from Cole's lightning powers makes for some impressive sparks and shadows. But there's a cost - the buildings are drawn with disappointingly jagged lines, and the metropolis is dampened by deliberate good/evil-themed blurring effects.

4 Graphics

Prototype trades off its dense chaos-packed environments against overall detail. There's a roughness to the visuals with bland textures, repeating character models and simplistic damage. But while there's a whiff of PS2 at times, it's compensated by the sheer number of people, monsters and stuff moving around the screen at once. A none-too-shabby feat considering you can cover miles in seconds with no slow down or loading and little pop-up.

► Shape-shifting is at the heart of all Alex's abilities, forming his body into a range of deadly weapons.

3 Powers

There's a huge range of abilities here. Alex can morph his body into blades, tentacle whips, claws; he can run straight up the side of buildings, glide and shape-shift into anyone he consumes. Plus he can steal tanks, choppers and guns. There's loads of fun to be had wandering the city ticking things off your to do list. ('Eviscerate entire street... done.') It's not quite as balanced as inFamous' selection and you'll often fall back on specific 'go to' powers to carve through missions.

► Nearly all Prototype's powers involve slicing people into chunks.

2 Gameplay

The focus here is on anarchy. The city is a spectacular sight as people crowd the streets and the army battle rampaging mutants. The only downside is the relentless chaos. Whether trying to infiltrate a base, steal a helicopter or kill every living thing in sight, it always ends up feeling like you're running screaming through a pile of exploding meat. There's no good or evil karma like inFamous, either. You're just really, really nasty.



▲ Hunters are dangerous and need to be killed extra hard.



feature

LBP Deathmatch



Deathmatch

The OPM team went head-to-head with one another in a **LittleBigPlanet** challenge: To build and publish a level from scratch in one day, with Media Molecule and the LBP community judging the results. This is what happened...

PS
085



Nathan



Tim



Leon



Rachel



Temple Of Mild Peril

Leon Hurley's little big adventure takes first place

Star rating



Hearts

13



Plays

40



Brilliant

Fun

Funky

Good

Short

Tricky



Fan
Verdict

Sean Latham

"By far
the best
OPM level."

I'll be honest: I was worried. I've made plenty of LBP levels, and while it's not impossible to knock things out quickly, to make anything decent needs time – whether for tuning, debugging, tea breaks or sobbing uncontrollably. Trying to smash something out isn't easy. But not wanting to worry the others I crossed my fingers and kept quiet.

I had two rules: 'keep it simple' and 'ditch it quick if it doesn't work'. Even then I worried about getting it done in a day. Things went wrong instantly - just dragging a key up a seesaw turned out to be a nightmare (1). The ramp had to be perfect or it got stuck. One of the hardest bits of the whole level was making a gentle slope. It didn't bode well. Then there were the springs which inexplicably and repeatedly yanked platforms up into the ceiling, to

"My plan was torn up like a letter to Mary Poppins, with no magic lady coming to save me."

disappear in little puffs of despair. Within the first two hours I was making cuts, emergency plans, and praying to any small burlap gods who might be listening.

What saved my life in the afternoon was copying and storing everything I built. Things like the big hole (2) took seconds as components were cut and pasted into place. Although the time I clawed back instantly disappeared when the crushing blocks hazard jammed constantly. Three complete rebuilds and a switch from stone to metal blocks got it working, but by then my plan was shot – torn up like a letter to Mary Poppins and with no magic lady coming to save me. To make up time the rest was furiously improvised. The baddy shootout (3) and the falling steps made it in simply because they worked first time. The puzzle, however, was dropped for a quick and dirty boss battle (4) plus an airship (5) flight to the end. It made a better finish overall and, crucially, left an hour to test everything, add cameras and type dialogue. And maybe have a little cry.

You're doing it wrong.





Puzzle world

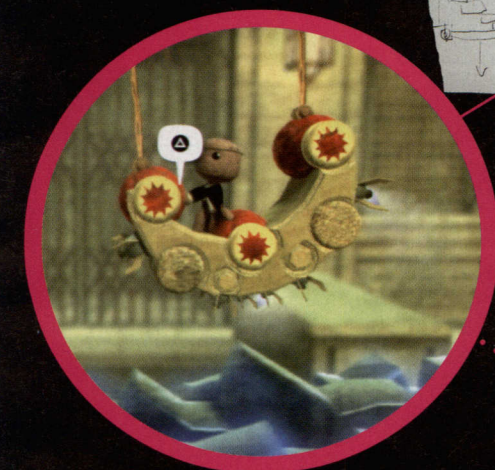
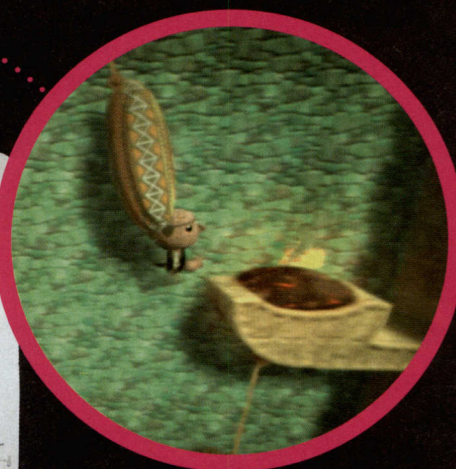
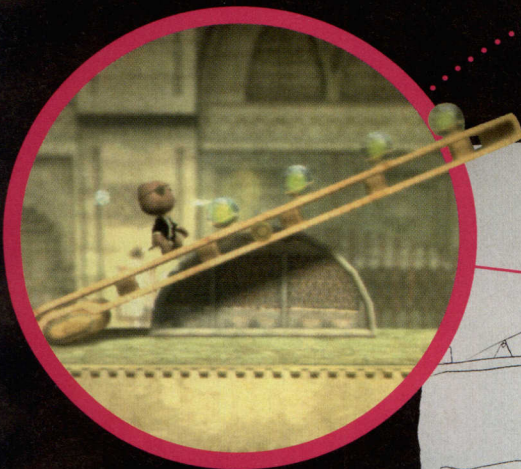
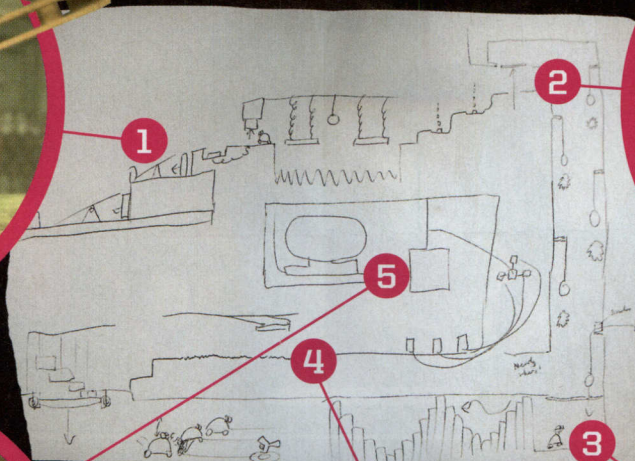
I wanted to keep things simple, like this puzzle where you had to lock the seesaw to reach the next level. No one got it right.

Level highlights

Leon's best bits

The drop

It took ages to make this drop. You had to swing between ropes to avoid fires. Or, as I later found out, fall straight down the middle.



High flier

I love balloons in LBP. A few rockets and grab switches to steer – they're always fun. Crucially it was quick to build.

Mr Gas Hands

This was the only thing I didn't build from scratch. He was a left over from an old creation and ended up as the level's 'boss'.

Firepower

I wanted the paintinator in somewhere so I made some enemies to blast. They jumped a bit high, though, so you had to be quick.

Developer verdict

The man from Media Molecule says...



James Spafford
Community manager

“The peril was indeed mild, however the level design was **possibly the most comprehensive** of the four OPM levels, containing more gameplay themes, plus the **writing was amusing**. We especially **enjoyed Mr Gas Hands**. The journey could've been more coherent, with more explanation about why you were killing gas fiends, but given more time for beautification, this would be **quite serviceable**.”

B-

Ratchet's Inferno

Rachel Penny's personal journey through hell

Star rating



Hearts

09



Plays

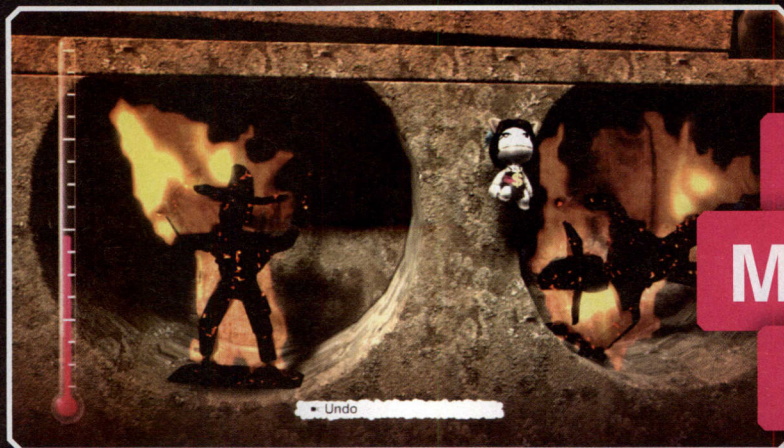
47



Fan Verdict

Martyn Bowell

"Good work. Took several attempts, but they..."



Beautiful

Cute

Machinery

Perilous

Short

Weird

I had such big dreams. A vision of hell, filled with demons, dastardly puzzles (think *Saw* meets *Ratchet & Clank*) and a giant Lucifer passing judgement at the end. The reality was a morning spent learning basic building skills. My first (some would argue only) success was my tiny angel (1). I glued her together out of random objects like a three-year-old at playgroup. Then came the basic shape of the level, all made out of dark matter, because I couldn't master fixing things in mid-air.

That alone took three hours! Suddenly it was lunchtime and I realised there was nothing for it – I had to delete everything and start again. I had made my level so huge, so monstrous, that I was never ever going to have time to fill it in one afternoon. And the boys needed the machine to play PES.

"I tried building my own monster, but crucially forgot to attach his legs."

"I can haz heartz?"



An hour later I started again, sketching out a smaller level, dropping in start and finish points, the odd cluster of spikes. I tried building my own monster (2) but crucially forgot to attach his legs. Time was running out! To make my asp of eternal damnation I nicked a snake from the pre-made objects and painted him red. Unfortunately, I programmed him to run away from approaching sack people. Oops (3). And as puzzles went, all I managed were some jumps and dangling corks (4).

Then, with minutes left, it was time for the big finale, the dark lord himself. Leon was standing over me at this point, tapping his watch, so he's entirely to blame for the stunted little demon you see before you (5). Feel free to send him hate emails.

The whole thing was an education, not least in the basic principles of physics. And I'm proud of my little flaming mess. The idea that *anyone* has played it amazes me. That a few loons actually liked it? It's a feeling probably only matched by watching your first born become Prime Minister.





Angel face

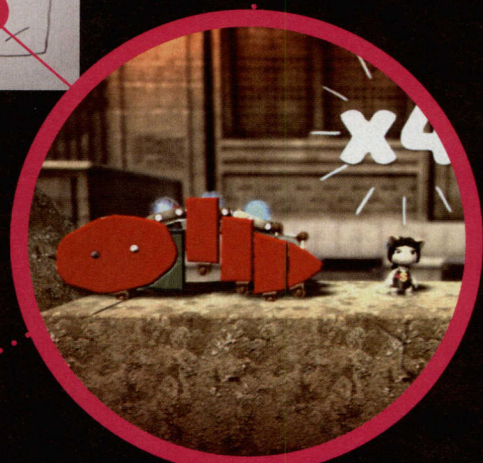
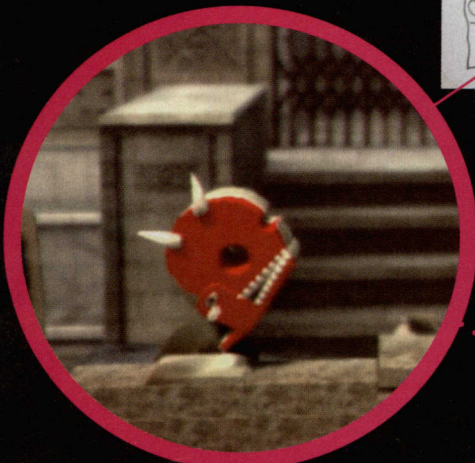
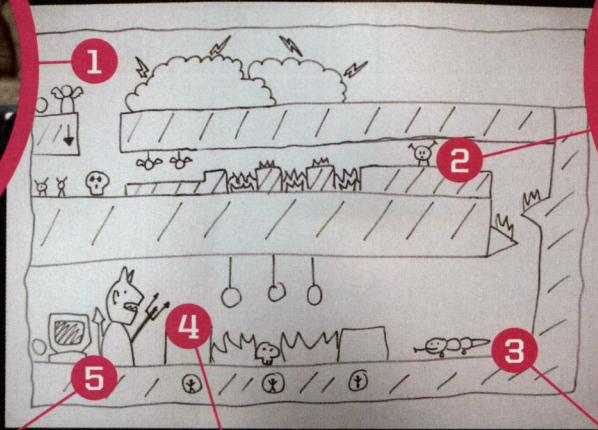
The angel (which Nathan tried to copy with sinister results) was my pet project. She's to make you feel welcome. You know, to hell.

Level highlights

Rachel's best bits

Crazy legs

Poor old monster. I got everything right! The brain, the funny eyes, the skull decor. I just forgot to glue his legs on.



PS3
089

Me so horny

My devil's horns upset his balance – he kept falling over like grandma after too much sherry. Not the dark lord I had envisaged. At all.

Fiery depths

Easy to make but looks like it took ages. Unless you fall into the skull, then you're stuck. Note the burning toy soldiers!

Snake eyes

Another broken monster from the Rachel Penny Book Of Disasters. Thank God I'm not an actual deity. Still, at least he looks cute.

Developer verdict

The man from Media Molecule says...



James Spafford
Community manager

“This level is based on a very popular theme for LBP: going to hell. As we all know, hell is filled with spikes, skulls, bats, and enemies who fall to bits as you approach them. Again **this is one of the better OPM efforts**, but perhaps a summary of this level can be taken from the text within it: “**We know what you did, and frankly we are disgusted**, but you have such **a pretty mouth**, we’ll let you go this time.”

C

Massive Free Rare Exclusive Prize

Nathan Ditum over-promises and under-delivers

Star rating



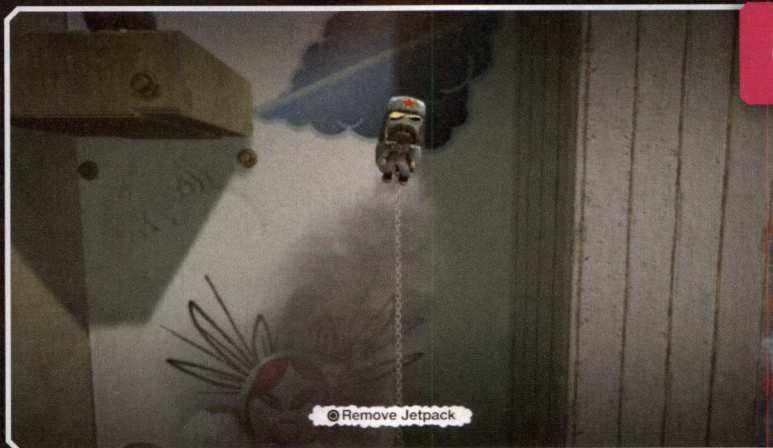
Hearts

09



Plays

30



Annoying

Complex

Easy

Points-fest

Toys

Repetitive

PS
090



Fan
Verdict

Iain Wilson

"WOWZERS!
So many
items!"

The main influence behind the design for MFREP was my dislike of planning and organisation. I'll admit I went in under-prepared – I've played a lot of LBP's story mode, but never so much as switched on the level editor. Overhearing the others brainstorming their creations was terrifying – talk of pivots, switches, levers and other things I barely understood. In short, it was clear from the beginning that constructing any kind of gameplay was out of the question. But while my knowledge of the game was weak, my knowledge of the fickle, greedy internet was strong, so I conceived a plan to lure people into my level, give them loads of stuff, and (hopefully) send them away happy.

I spent the morning searching for other levels as cynical as the one I intended

"My ambition outpaced my abilities within minutes."

to create – stuffed with pre-made (and crucially un-copyrighted) items. I stripped them out and set to work building a shell of a level to house my stolen swag. Initially it was heaven-themed, with an angel (1) guiding you to a hall of beautiful rewards. But my ambition outpaced my abilities within minutes. My angel came out... wrong. I couldn't make the music work, and my 'cloud' stickers made the path to heaven look like the cheapest wallpaper in Homebase. Running out of time, I put up the three pillars that dominate my level and filled up the gaps in-between – one side with item bubbles, the other with points. I spent ages placing the items into the bubbles (2) including the focal point: a giant bubble containing a picture of Leon's face (3). I hoped it would stretch to terrifying size, but it didn't.

I realised too late that I'd forgotten to build a path from one bucket of bubbles to the next, and so hollowed out a section of each pillar (4).

Badly, it turned out, making it almost unplayable. As a final flourish I put in a stolen wheel car thing (5), which speeds you to the finish. It'll kill you four times in ten. Ta-da!

But I worked so hard!





The angel

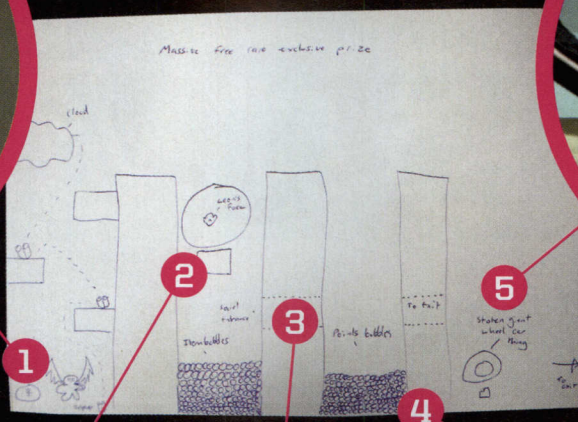
Conceived as cute but comforting guardian to guide your path. Ended up as horrifying fly-winged pudge-beast.

Level highlights

Nathan's best bits

The wheel thing

Originally the level ended with a series of vehicles and ramps (a stolen idea) but it fell to pieces as soon as I switched to play mode.



The prizes

Took over an hour to painstakingly insert each item into its own bubble, and at several points it seemed as though the PS3 was on the verge of a coma. Worth it though. Right?

Leon's face

My plan to 'steal stuff' had Leon thrashing around like a cat in water shouting 'cheat'. It seemed only fitting that I stole his actual face.

The points

Maybe unnecessary in retrospect. The idea was to boast that players could earn the 'million points earned' in the level description, but I was too lazy to fill it out.

Developer verdict

The man from Media Molecule says...



James Spafford
Community manager

“ Oh you **sneaky, sneaky creator** – luring in your prey with a name **promising massive prizes**. At least that's what we thought anyway, expecting the name to be a trick. Instead we found **a level that was ugly and hilariously amateur**, but **actually full of community prizes and points**. Millions of them. A **total lack of polish and gameplay** is made up for by the **LOL factor**. ”

D

My Icy Tubez

You won't be walking in a winter wonderland with Tim Clark's effort

Star rating



Hearts

11



Plays

53



Fan Verdict

Matthew Brown

"That was really fun, loved it :D"



Electric

Moody

Pretty

Race

Short

Rubbish

In my mind, it was going to be a delightful fusion of vintage-era Disney and that bit in Fight Club where Ed Norton goes sliding with a penguin. As things turned out, my level is more like a terrifying Hungarian political cartoon in which a tiny sack worker is crushed by the forces of capitalism. In this case represented by three teddy bears.

Things went wrong surprisingly fast. Reasoning that my previous level – the little-loved 'My Red Hot Ballz' – had taken almost a week to 'complete', my plan was based on the idea that less is very much more. It was meant to go like this: Exciting loop-the-loop made from ice, big jump, fly through spike corridor and end on a song with a boss battle against a giant polar bear.

From the outset I struggled. Firstly, with how many 3D planes to build in. (I opted for two, on the basis that it was the Blair-like middle option.) Then with the camera, which I had to keep shifting between the head-on and isometric view to

"My plan was based on the idea that less is very much more."

see what I was doing. The real ballache, though, was making the slide. Even with frictionless glass as the material, I just couldn't get the angle right to make sackboy do loops. With almost the entire morning wasted on trying to iron kinks out of the slide, I downscaled to a simple ski-jump design (1). From there things picked up, particularly with the cloud-based platforming sequence (2). As lunch loomed, I clicked save, and felt my heart turn to actual ice as the screen locked up. Turns out LBP doesn't like trying to save four hours of work in one go. Fatal crash. Everything gone. A single tear formed.

After a monumental stop, triggered when Leon sauntered over saying "don't blame the game", like I'd designed the goddamn save system, work was resumed. The afternoon was a blur of retractable spikes (3), angry bears (4) and the music from Alexander Nevsky. That's the magic of LBP. The rush of creation, even when what you're creating is technically a bit bum, is like nothing else. And so it was that when I downed tools, my face was lit with the love of a proud father for his idiot son (5).

God made me wrong.



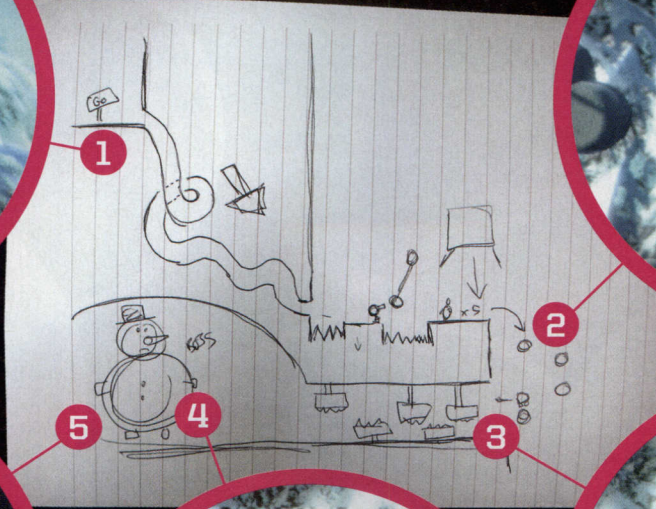


Slide away

Years of Pro Evo abuse have left my hands crippled with RSI, which made drawing the long slope infuriatingly tricky.

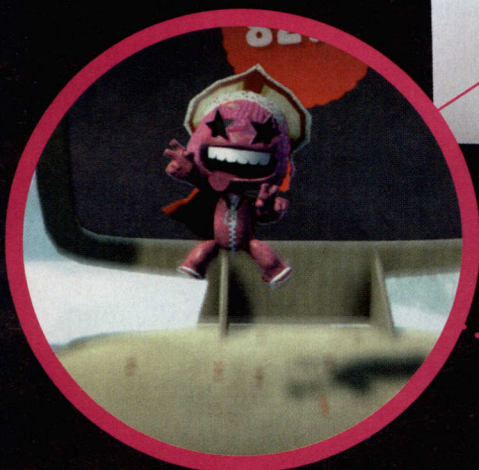
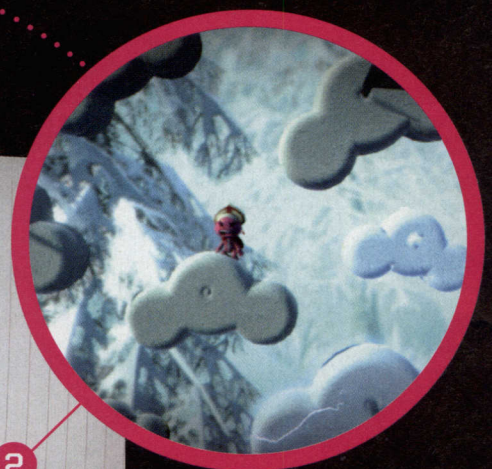
Level highlights

Tim's best bits



Cloud strife

After the enormo jump you land, thrillingly, among some lovely spongey clouds. Some of which I electrified. Hey, that's level design.



PS3
093

Score bored

Mercifully, it's over almost before there's really time for the involuntary shaking to kick in. No prizes, no little flourish to end on, just the cold simplicity of some numbers on a screen. It's elegiac in a way.

Boss bears

What's better than one brilliant boss to fight? Three bosses that are so inept they can only just stay upright long enough for you to attack their absurdly exposed weak spots.

Turbulence tunnel

I wanted to use a jet-pack and by Christ I did. This bravura section involves flying down a tunnel while avoiding spiky blocks. It's essentially the climax of Star Wars, as reimagined in felt, by a moron.

Developer verdict

The man from Media Molecule says...



James Spafford
Community manager

“ Oh deary dear, this level was **very, very short** indeed, carried **classic beginner themes** and a **very confusing level path**. To top it all off, it was **boring**. We did however enjoy the **giant bouncing bears** with 'CRAZY' written on their foreheads. To summarise, we'll reference your LBP review: "The best game on PS3 is the one *you* make..." Unless it's this level. **Don't give up your day job!** ”

F+

In the mood for... Vampires

A pint with PlayStation's most vicious creatures of the night

Whether we're watching them make the sex with Buffy, getting worryingly lost in their eyes in *Twilight*, or cringing at Keanu's mangled English accent in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, our infatuation with claret-thirsty darkstalkers will never die. So it's with relish that in the world of PlayStation we get to take them on – and even get to *be* them. Grab some garlic bread and get a priest to bless your water pistol as we take you on a tour of gaming's greatest vamps.

Raziel (Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver)

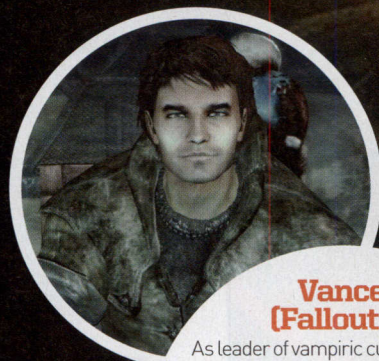
Annoying his boss, Kain, by evolving wings before him, Raziel is thrown into the River Of The Dead as punishment.

After years in limbo he returns as a wraith, intent on revenge. In the meantime Kain has corrupted the land of Nosgoth by not sacrificing himself. It looks as though someone's about to do it for him...



Vance (Fallout 3)

As leader of vampiric cult The Family, Vance spends his time adopting flesh-eating outcasts into his gang. Play this handsome chap right and he teaches you the Hematophage perk, which lets you suck 20HP from otherwise useless blood packs you find along the way. He's the only person who can teach you this, so suck up to him before he sucks you...



Jericho Cross (Darkwatch)

Imagine *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly* but with Clint Eastwood chewing on bandits' arteries instead of cheroots.

During a train robbery Jericho accidentally releases a vampire, Lazarus Malkoth, getting gothed up himself in the process. He then signs up with the evil police, Darkwatch, and turns his horse into a vamp. Nice teeth, neddly.



Nitara (Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance)

A good-quality bikini is all you need to protect against evisceration, right? And this vixen fights back by hurling balls of blood or biting opponents' necks. One of the game's endings sees her turn into a blood god, capable of turning opponents into vampire slaves. As undead mistresses go, we'd say they got lucky.



intermission

A tasty PlayStation snack



Rayne (BloodRayne)

Forget military strategies and Spitfires; we should've had Rayne to kick Nazi keester. A blood-sipping assassin as likely to sex you up as suck you dry, she was recruited by anti-vampire cult The Brimstone Society to stop Hitler's henchmen in their tracks. Which she did, then went on to be one of the first videogame characters to go topless in Playboy.



Slayer (Guilty Gear)

Not Sarah Michelle Gellar's tight-trousered vamp-stabber, but a teleporting vampire who's impervious to sunlight. The beat-'em-up's aristocratic immortal is more interested in puffing his pipe than showing his fangs, and he can't even be KO'd - beat him and he just lies down with a wry smile.

We'd damn him if he wasn't already damned.

Now have your say

Have we forgotten your favourite blood-lusting fiend? Let us know at opm@futurenet.com. Ones we almost picked...

■ Demitri Maximoff from Darkstalkers is a bit like Ryu, in that he throws fireballs. And not like Ryu, in that he's Romanian and dead. And has awful dress sense.

■ Castlevania's Mathias Cronqvist turned himself into the count of crushed jugulars, Dracula. Just Dracula? That's so cliché.

■ Vicente Valtieri was a garlic-hating executioner in Oblivion's Dark Brotherhood. He's far too miserable to feature here, though.

PS
095

feature

Brink



P A R A D I S E



feature

Brink

L O S T

PS
097

Terror, apocalypse and conspiracy.
With exclusive access, we discover
why the fallen world of **Brink** is home
to a new breed of shooter... ►



▲ You can interrogate downed enemies. Or, you know, shoot them.

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS
PlayStation



▲ The Security outfits (left) wear authoritarian blue and black, while the Resistance (right) look improvised in red and orange.

It's like Call Of Duty 4, but sci-fi. "We're in." This is how we were hooked on Brink, the new shooter from PC veteran Splash Damage. But having spoken to the team, it's clear that even this high praise doesn't really do the game justice. Yes, it has the punchy guns and hellish warzones of COD4. But it also has

the bright, distinctive looks of a Timesplitters or Mirror's Edge, the switch-in, switch-out replayability of Left4Dead, the complex multiplayer challenge of Quake Wars Enemy Territory, and a dramatic single-player campaign strong enough to knit it all together. In short, if Splash Damage can deliver on its ambitious aims, Brink will be amazing. Naturally,

we wanted to know as much as possible, so OPM hooked up a visit to the developer's South London studio – making us the first magazine in the world to see Brink on its home patch. This what we found out.

The plot is high-concept dystopian stuff. In the near future a scientific facility called the

interlinked islands (designed specifically to give a variety of playing environments), and the wave-breaking barrier which protects it all on the open seas.

Raiders of the lost Ark

Meanwhile, the outside world goes to hell, with rising waters devastating agriculture and unbalancing international relations. By 2045, the year the game is set, the Ark hasn't had any official contact with the outside world for two decades. What they have had is a stream of refugees, people who have turned to the Ark as the last inhabitable place on Earth. Two distinct communities have evolved – the elite founding group of scientists and the super rich, and the 'guests', once a euphemistic term for the refugee population

"Play seamlessly, online, off, solo, co-op or competitively."

Ark is launched as a visionary test-bed for experimental technology – self-sustaining eco-systems, green energy, other things Clarkson would hate. Over time, financial problems force the project to swerve from its original humanitarian purpose, first through celebrity endorsements (a ten-star hotel attracts jet-setters and paparazzi) and eventually by creating a space in which corporations and nations conduct their less desirable research behind closed doors. The Ark is hauled out into international waters – the looming focal point of Founder's Tower, the surrounding flotilla comprising scores of

now used by the founders unironically.

Then, this being a shooter, they fight. Or, more specifically, the militarised tips of these two opposing groups fight – the Resistance, sick of their ramshackle living conditions and suspicious of the official line peddled by the Ark's command, and the Security, preserving order and enforcing the law. More important than the fact they're fighting is *how* they fight. Splash Damage has leveraged its expertise with engaging, objective-led multiplayer shooters to come up with a first for PS3: a game that can be played seamlessly online or offline, solo, co-op or competitively.



You play with your custom character online and off.

You start by choosing sides and designing a custom character, who you'll beef up with XP-bought upgrades as you play. You then take this character into the game, which might start with you playing on your own, but can grow to include up to 15 friends playing on either side. "It's full drop in and out support," says studio director Paul Wedgewood, describing Brink's uniquely open approach. "Mid-match, [if a friend] comes online, he can connect straight in and replaces one of the AI on your squad. And so now we're playing co-operatively, me, him and six AI squad members." The same goes for the next friend who comes online, and the next and so on. Anyone who joins the game does so with their unique character, and friends can also join as respawning enemy characters to hold up your progress. The only thing you'll have to back out of the story mode for is to play full, eight-vs-eight competitive games, which take place in the same maps as the story campaign, but with a choice of objectives.

Are you experienced?

The potential here is huge. Playing as a persistent character in solo or multiplayer brings XP-whoring to a logical next level (and gives you the chance to level up *before* wandering onto the net-based battlefields like a sacrificial lamb), while the seamless online transitions sound like the ingenious ease of Burnout transplanted to shooterland. And, perhaps most tantalisingly, the different-every-time nature of missions played with friends reminds us a lot of the atmospheric

moreishness of Left4Dead, which it doesn't seem like PS3 owners will be enjoying any time soon. Now it looks like it doesn't matter.

As with Splash Damage's PC games, Brink is focused on a complex objectives system, but one that's been intelligently re-designed with consoles in mind. Wedgewood, who was a hardcore Quake player, is keen to capture the thrill of working as an online team to PS3. "What I loved from that period was when I played with my clan and we worked out our strategies and everything before we started," he says. "We were *obsessed* with it.

I remember writing a 20-page document called 'Dynamically Modifiable Offence and Defence' – we had colour codes and plays, the whole thing worked out."

To this end the team has come up with the Wheel, a circular quick-select menu offering a variety of constantly updated actions, with a sliding scale of XP-reward attached to each. "Whenever you choose from the Wheel

you make a commitment," explains Brink's creative director Richard Ham. "That information gets broadcast to other team members and creates new missions for them – either to support or back you up." We see how it works on a level called Container City, a dockyard-turned-shanty-town with piles of rusted freight cans built into a refugee city. The Wheel throws up central objectives crucial to progressing through the level – blow this gate, repair this crane – and various support objectives, like switching class to an Engineer with the tools to repair, or interrogating an enemy soldier (by tazing them until crispy). Each completed



Q&A

Paul Wedgewood, Splash Damage



Brink looks very unusual.

What influenced the design?

If you were to ask Olivier Leonardi, our art director, he would be able to cite a million references for all of his influences. Like most genius artists, he's also incredibly modest. But honestly, I just think he had a really great vision for the game where he wanted it to be stylish and a bit more of a caricature, [which] also takes the edge off what would otherwise be pretty violent. Most of us are fairly dispassionate about the endless brown games and, you know, this sepia and mud-coloured stream of stuff that gets produced in this pursuit of realism. What we decided was that we absolutely wanted photo-realistic lighting, or near-photo-realistic lighting, we wanted really good quality animation, incredibly good quality audio and the choice to be stylish with characters and environments. I think people like that in general, they like things to be a little bit different to what they're used to. It doesn't have to be a game about 16th Century French feminism to be innovative.

Is the sound design of Brink unusual? The guns during the big firefights sound properly furious...

The traditional way that you do audio for a videogame is that you buy a ton of audio effects CDs and you go through them trying to find a pistol, a machine gun or whatever else. But instead of just recruiting a sound designer, we hired an audio director. His name is Chris Sweetman, and he did the audio for Black. He's spent, like, ten years trying to perfect a shotgun noise – he's just completely obsessed with it. So for the weapons, he went out to Nevada, and they hooked up 20 microphones around a load of weapons – I think they had about 120 weapons – recording everything from the way the shells sound when they eject from the clip to bullets flying past microphones, how they sound shot from here [on the shoulder] and here [looking down the sights].

Do you have a similar approach when it comes to other areas, like camerawork?

We hired a guy called Aubrey Hesselgren, and he's obsessed with movement. In fact, he was in the Jump London DVD, which is where the phrase "free running" comes from. He's done things like tape cameras to his head and run around his parents' farm, and recorded himself beating up his dad, and jumping off walls onto mattresses – all kinds of stuff, so we could get a better sense of what camera movement should really be like. So, out of all of this, these two basic ideas came along and they were Chris Sweetman's idea, which was "ears, not speakers" – how are your ears affected in combat? – Rather than using speakers to replay samples from a CD. And then Aubrey's thing is "eyes, not cameras", and he actually has code in the game that kind of simulates the way that eyeballs react independently of each other. And all of it is just to push advanced kinaesthetics – to make the way it feels, the way you're hit, the way that you react, the way you hear things, the way you move and interface with the game a much more immersive experience.

Are you worried about having a custom character, instead of a central hero figure?

Well, you are the hero. And really, you always are in every single game, it's just that the videogame doesn't trust you to decide the way that the character should look. Our solution to that is to give you an incredible array of cool outfits and weapons and things that you can do to reflect the way that you want to look. But with, of course, the control that we have because we're the ones that created those things. We still chose the colours, we still chose the options, and we know that they all go very well together – it's quite hard to make a character who doesn't look really good.



▲ Founder's Tower is the posh end of town, at the Ark's centre.

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS
PlayStation®
Official Magazine UK

objective has a knock-on effect reflected on the other players' Wheel – the interrogation might reveal a shortcut which needs unblocking, or you might need protecting while you repair that crane.

Objectively speaking

The objectives system brings with it a potential for huge variety and replayability, though without a central character or scripted route through the game, the story will need to be strong and compelling to stop the whole thing feeling disjointed. Early signs are good – the end of the Container City level has the Security team punching into a cargo container to be met with an eerie green



■ Both sides are made up of different classes – medics, stealthy operatives and (pictured far-right) toolled-up engineers.



off in full. And more significantly, the team are talking up their work on kinaesthetics, the feel of being in a first-person world. "I wrote in the original concept that I'd love to have freedom of movement," explains

in real-time all of the possible options that you have available to you, exactly the same way that your subconscious would do if you were sprinting through a building right now," he says. "You don't have to sit there and go, 'Right, what button am I gonna press next, what am I gonna do next?' It's the idea of interpretative control, not simple analogue on-offness."

This, essentially, is why we're so interested in Brink – because it's not happy with just being a strong, abrasively loud and punchy shooter. It wants to change the way we play games online, giving us more flexibility – and addictive, character-building XP – than we've ever had before. It wants to revolutionise the way we negotiate first-person worlds, and as a result how they can be designed and conceived. And it wants to do all this while looking *really* pretty – colourful, vivid, unique – and while telling us an amazing story. Can it be done? Christ knows, but we're looking forward to finding out.

"Brink wants to change the way we play online."

luminescence, the camera picking up the glow on their open-mouthed faces before fading into cliff-hanger darkness.

In short, it looks like we're good hands. And one thing we're even more sure about even at this early stage is that Brink's core gameplay will be exceptional. The shooting and movement is solid and clean, the bright, exaggerated visuals contrasting brilliantly with thunderous sound effects, which build into a hammering chaos when the fights kick

Wedgewood. This led to the invention of the Smart button, a catch-all control for negotiating Brink's environment which selects movement options based on where the player is looking.

We're shown an example where, in the Ark's deserted airport, Wedgewood jumps his character over a security gate, and then slides under the same gate's laser sensors, by looking either up or down as he presses the button. "The technology actually analyses

Splash Damage

Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory

PC, 2003

A shooter based on id's Return To Castle Wolfenstein. After years of making levels and mods for id, this marked Splash Damage's first professionally published title. Released for free as a multiplayer-only game.



Doom 3

PC, 2004

Following the success of Enemy Territory, Splash Damage was hired to provide the multiplayer portion of id's heavily-hyped sequel, designing the maps for the game which first released on PC and later on Xbox.



Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

PC, 2007

The follow-up to the Wolfenstein expansion, built around the same class-based multiplayer action, but this time set in the Quake universe. Received a full commercial release, and a disappointing PS3 port (not by Splash Damage).



Next month in...

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

On sale
4 August
Subscribe
today on page
23

PS
101

The Dark Knight returns

Batman: Arkham Asylum. The exclusive review.

Content subject to change.

PlayStation® Official Magazine UK

summerofpsp.com



YOUR MAGIC. YOUR ADVENTURE. YOUR SPECIAL EDITION VIBRANT BLUE PSP™

YOUR WHOLE WORLD IN YOUR HANDS

Enter a world of magic. Investigate Hogwarts, create spells and potions with some of your favourite characters and see if you can defeat the Half-Blood Prince™.

Visit summerofpsp.com for your chance to win a fantastic holiday for you and your family, as well as loads of other prizes.

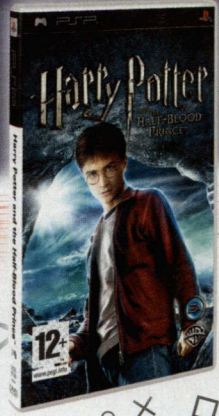
www.harrypotter.ea.com



PSP®
PlayStation®Portable



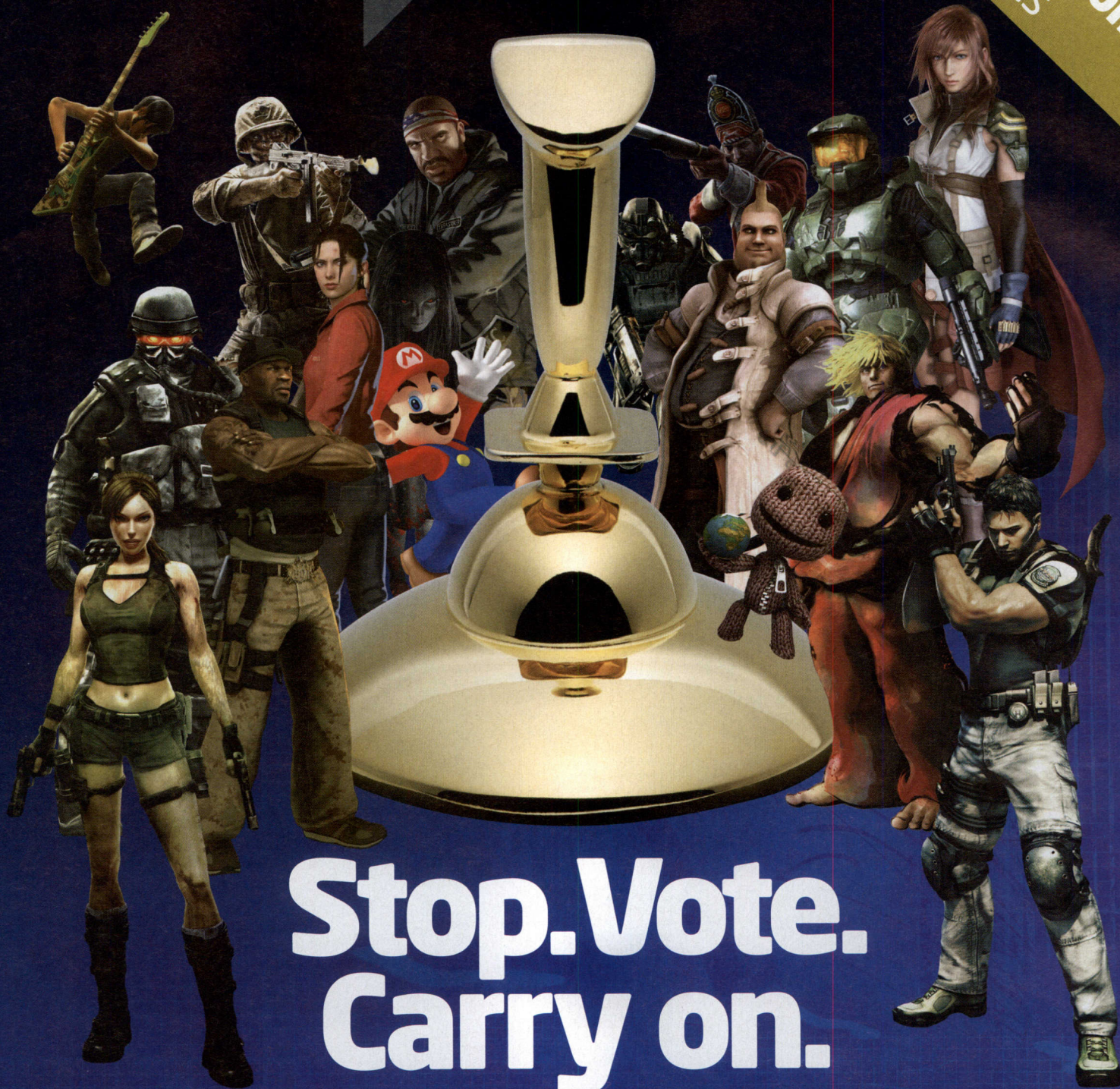
"PlayStation", "PSP", and "AOXI" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "EA" is a registered trademark of EA GAMES. "Harry Potter" characters, names and all related indicia are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Harry Potter Publishing Rights © J.K.R. WBIE LOGO WB SHIELD™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. (s09) HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE Software © 2009 Electronic Arts Inc. EA and the EA logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners pspinyourhands.com





27th ANNUAL
**GOLDEN
JOYSTICK
AWARDS**

vote now at
goldenjoystick.com
and win prizes



Stop. Vote. Carry on.

Thousands of your fellow gamers have cast their vote to decide gaming history, have you cast yours?

The Golden Joystick Awards are known globally as 'The People's Gaming Awards' and they're the industry's most prestigious. Why? Because they're voted for by you and this is your opportunity to make sure your favourite game claims the ultimate gaming accolade, a Golden Joystick Award. This years long list saw a record breaking 272,680 votes – and now we're down to the business end of deciding who wins. And if you need an extra incentive, we'll be giving away some brilliant prizes in our 'landmark' voting system. So you might just win an LCD TV, PS3 or Xbox just for exercising your democratic right!



Register your vote, make history and reaffirm your democratic voting right at **www.goldenjoystick.com** now!

The
OPM review
setup



Our review code is tested on hi-def and standard-def TVs to ensure we know how games perform at both ends of the scale. Our HD setup is a 70" Sony Bravia with Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK
Reviews

Your essential guide to every new release

The word astonishing is banded around recklessly these days, but as a description of *Fight Night Round 4*, it's absolutely justified. Purely because it looks incredible: skin stretching, muscles tensing and heads snapping with outrageous authenticity. The only thing that stops it feeling totally lifelike is the occasional sponginess of the punching, which can make the game feel a bit like one of those dreams where you're trying to fight but your arms move too slowly. And it's exam day and you've forgotten to revise. And you've got no trousers on.

Speaking of such, *Call Of Juarez* is very much a game which is all mouth and no trousers. It talks the talk – gritty Western setting, *Red Dead*-style gunslinging – but for reasons you can read about on p110, fails to walk the walk. Elsewhere we've got *Rock Band Unplugged* – the series' first crack at PSP – as well as Japanese phenomenon *Monster Hunter: Freedom Unite*, a look at Tiger Woods' annual spit and polish, PS1 classics *Final Fantasy VII* and *Metal Gear Solid*, and loads more.



FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

Horrifically realistic facial dismemberment and one of the meatiest fighting engines on PS3. Can it match office fave *UFC 2009* blow for blow?



**CALL OF JUAREZ:
BOUND IN BLOOD**

Brawling brothers in a gritty trawl across the Old West. With guns. By all rights it should be amazing, but... well, you'll see.



**ROCK BAND
UNPLUGGED**

Music game based on the joy of giant plastic instruments without any giant plastic instruments. A disaster in motion, or an ingenious new way of playing?

How we score our reviews...

10 Essential

Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection.

9 Outstanding

Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

8 Very good

Mostly excellent, but held back by one or two minor flaws.

7 Good

Enjoyable, but with definite room for improvement. Rent it first.

6 Reasonable

A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places.

5 Average

A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measure.

4 Below average

Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity.

3 Poor

A seriously flawed game with no long-term appeal.

2 Awful

A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

1 Horrific

Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.

**GOLD
AWARD**
PlayStation
Official Magazine

**Our highest
accolade**

The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and profound appeal.

reviewPS3
Fight Night Round 4



Spar weekend

Fight Night Round 4

EA's heavyweight boxes beautifully



Info

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now
Pub EA **Dev** EA Canada **Players** 1-2
Web fightnight.easports.com
It's like A great-looking, if slightly woolly, recreation of real boxing.

Wow. Just wow. Fight Night Round 4 might well be the best-looking sports game ever made, and your first hour with it will leave you in genuine awe... At the way skin slides across and against a boxer's skull when he catches a right hook squarely on the jaw. At your boy's stomach muscles flexing and straining naturally as he puts his all into a jab. At the trunks, crowds, refs, arenas, announcers, boxer likenesses... at *everything*, basically. Visually, it can't be faulted. And the best part is that most of the time, the gameplay is as good as the graphics. Most of the time.

Bok-a-doodle-doo

If you're completely new to the series, what you need to know is that this the fourth incarnation (duh!) of EA's deservedly acclaimed boxing franchise, which replaced Knockout

Kings in 2004. Chiefly because Knockout Kings was a massive ballbag of nonsense. It's had boxing fans the world over going gaga for it ever since, and for those who played and loved Round 3, there's lots to be excited about here – as well as a few noteworthy changes from last time you stepped in the ring.

Most of these tweaks are tied into a streamlined control system. As with FNR3, the left stick moves your fighter and the right acts as your fists, so flicking **↵** on the latter delivers a jab with your left hand, while pressing **↵→↵↵** aims an uppercut with your right. It's a natural system, aided by the no-brainer decision to amend the way in which you throw shots to the body by simply nudging **↵** or **↵** on the right stick. Haymakers are also delivered differently from FNR3, by holding **△** to modify a normal punch. It's awkward, but still an improvement on the last game's super-fiddly spin-the-stick-and-hope approach.

The beauty of this control system is that while on paper you're *merely* inputting a jab or hook or uppercut command, the actual result is contextual and dependent on a number of factors: height, reach, position in relation to opponent, whether he's blocking or ducking. So you could throw ten uppercuts in a row and get a different outcome for each: the first glancing sweat off your opponent's forehead, the second sliding off his raised glove, the third piercing beneath his block and crunching him squarely on the chin, ➤

Timeline PlayStation boxing highs and lows

1998

Knockout Kings
PS1

A new series from EA that over the next five years would feature Frank Bruno, Lennox Lewis... and some of the worst gameplay seen in any boxing game ever.

1999

Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
PS1

Cartoony, wildly fun arcadey fisticuffs with a great gimmick: fill your 'RUMBLE' meter to access a spectacular instant-KO special move.

2002

Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing
PS2

Appalling mess of canned combos, shonky AI and bust comms make this the worst sports game Codies ever published.

2004

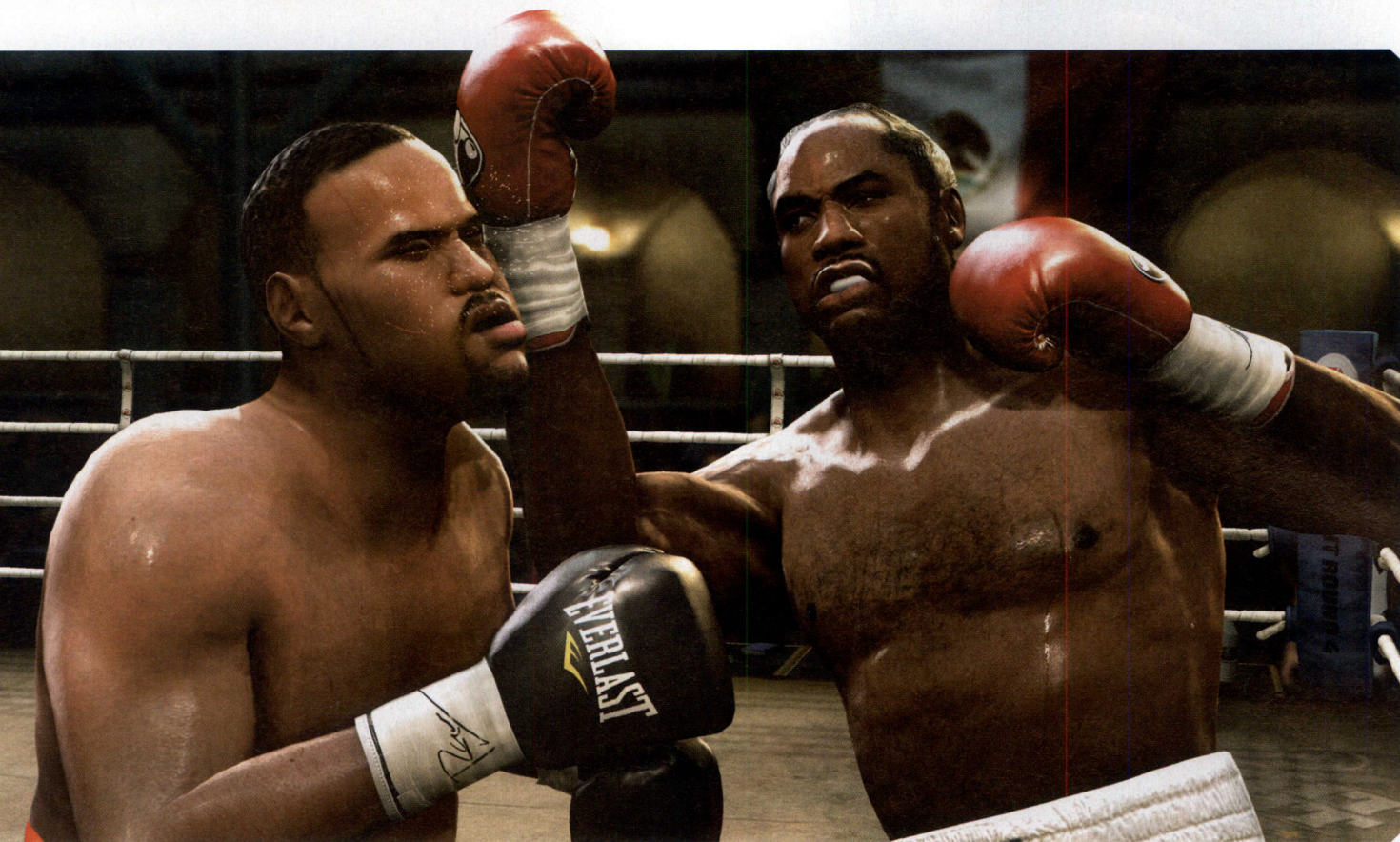
Fight Night 2004
PS2

A revolution thanks to its right-stick-to-punch controls. Sequel Round 2 expanded on this with the addition of haymakers.

2007

Fight Night Round 3
PS3

The first boxing game on next-gen lived up to its billing, with standout visuals and a removal of the traditional HUD. Ace.



108

and so on. It's great, and means the oft-used promise that 'no two fights will ever be the same' actually rings true. Indeed, no two rounds are ever the same.

That variation is impressive, but the actual feel of the punching isn't so much, particularly when compared to the recently released UFC Undisputed 2009. While each game covers a different discipline, anyone who's spent time with the latter will find FNR4's fisticuffs underwhelming. Get smashed across the face by a Mirko Cro Cop kick in UFC and you can sense the damage done. Every time. Have George Foreman repeatedly chin you in Fight Night and... mostly you'll just shrug your shoulders and carry on. It's nonetheless an

■ The contextual engine means there are loads of different punches – but the big ole' uppercut will always be our fave.

"The promise that no two fights are the same actually rings true."

impressive visual to see Big George knock someone backwards, but there just isn't much feeling to it.

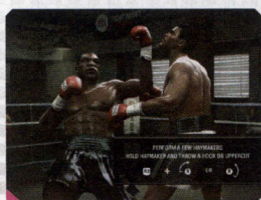
Still, the game throws up its fair share of special moments. As well as knocking your opponent down by emptying his health bar, catching them just right makes the usually blue bar flash red, opening him up to a knock-out and usually resulting in a flurry of desperate swinging (from you) and last-resort blocking (or attempts to clinch) from your opponent. Whether fighting another person or the AI, these bits are always

exciting, and the pinnacle of Round 4 – especially as one-off KOs are all too rare, even in the heavyweight division. The latter makes fights artificially fairer than in the UFC game, particularly when up against mates, but I'll take the dramatic insta-finishes of THQ's game every time.

Character masterclass

A major focus of the development team has been incorporating the individual styles of each fighter, right down to them having their own unique X-button punch (see Big-name debutants).

The first three hours in... Fight Night Round 4



00.01 hours

First timer

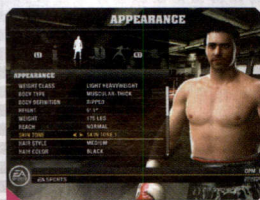
Impatiently get to grips with blocking in the tutorial, which launches as soon as the game starts up. Just wanna punch stuff, just wanna punch stuff...



00.24 hours

Pacquing heat

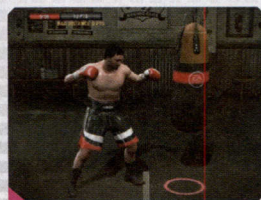
Am punching stuff! More specifically, Ricky Hatton's nose, jaw and [taps X] crown jewels. What, ref? Point off? No! Scowl at inability to leather ump.



01.00 hours

Mirror image (?)

Start legacy mode by creating self using snazzy PS Eye face tech. Snazzy PS Eye face tech produces image that looks more like colleague Nath. Odd.



02.24 hours

Punchbag trials

Boxer Ben (or is it Nath?) made to do mini-games before each fight. Become tedious about, ooh, six seconds into the first one. 'Sim' button = sweet relief.



03.00 hours

New champion

Undeclared streak at amateur level enables virtual Ben to turn pro. Can buy new trunks etc, but just wanna punch stuff, just wanna punch stuff...



▲ Like in his heyday, Ali can float like a boat and sting like a wasp. Yup, we know our catchphrases.



▲ Unlike in Round 3, the simple, clean trio of bars mean FNR4 is best played with the HUD on.



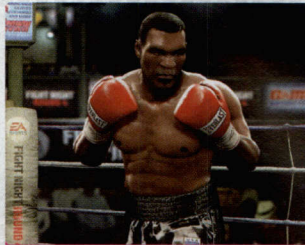
▲ Quick, powerful and well-rounded, Manny Pacquiao is a joy to control. And usually wins.

It means that pitting ear-biting maniac Iron Mike against the greatest of all time (not you, Lennox – we mean Ali) isn't only special because each looks exactly as he did in his prime, but because they play like it too. Tyson's shortness and lack of reach mean you need to have the confidence to get in close to your opponent to inflict big damage, whereas Ali's strength is ducking and weaving around the ring to tire his opponent, then picking him off as his stamina wears down. You can still choose to wade in swinging, but longevity – and improvement – come from learning and mastering each character. Two-player fights become brilliantly tactical as a result, once the initial temptation to constantly hold **B2** and throw strings of desperate uppercuts has worn away.

The only downside to the otherwise excellent individual styling is that there's a sameyness to some of the lesser-known fighters, similar to the way FIFA games concentrate their efforts on making the Liverpools and Milans of the football world feel unique while League Two teams get squads of nondescript genero-men. Foreman against Frazier feels special. Vivian Harris vs Kermit Cintron could just as easily be Calvin Harris vs Kermit the Frog. While most

Big-name debutants

A rousing ovation for these Fight Night freshmen



MIKE TYSON

Some call him one of the greatest of all time, others the most overrated. Became the youngest heavyweight champion ever before biting Evander Holyfield's ear during a bout and later being convicted of rape.

Nickname	Iron Mike
Nationality	American
Weight division	Heavyweight
Years active	1985-2005
Boxing record	50-6-2
Signature punch	Ducking lead hook



JOE CALZAGHE

2007 BBC Sports Personality Of The Year whose 16-year undefeated streak includes wins over Chris Eubank and fellow Round 4 inclusion Roy Jones Jr. Finally included in Fight Night after years of fan pleading.

Nickname	The Italian Dragon
Nationality	Welsh
Weight division	Light heavyweight
Years active	1993-present
Boxing record	46-0-0
Signature punch	Chin fake straight



JORGE ARCE

One of only two flyweights in the game (the other being Nonito Donaire). Famed for once coming to the ring on a dancing horse. Sadly, this entrance doesn't feature in Fight Night Round 4. Boooo!

Nickname	El Travieso
Nationality	Mexican
Weight division	Flyweight
Years active	1996-present
Boxing record	50-5-1
Signature punch	Bolo lead hook



▲ Rock your foe and he'll be briefly stunned – that's the time to go for the big haymaker. "Now, Lennox. NOW!"

will gloss over this and happily stick to the Pacquiao and Hattons, it's a fault EA needs to rectify across its line-up.

Rising star

When you're not putting the big names through their paces in exhibition, you'll be trying to punch them out in Legacy mode. On the surface it's traditional sports game career mode 101, but there are some likeable twists on this staid mechanic. Being called out for a fight by a rival and having to achieve appearances on ESPN and pay per views in order to hasten your progress makes sense in terms of moving up the ladder, and fleshes out the world beyond the standard 'fight, train, increase stats' routine.

Character advancement is well paced and there's a genuine thrill in taking a virtual version of yourself [complete with the chiselled physique you always knew was just six



▲ Controversial outside the ring but fabulous in it, the late Carlos Monzon is another FN debutant.

months down the gym, and a year off the beer, away) through the boxing echelons. But that sense of achievement comes long after you've given up on the tedious mini-games included as a means of improving your attributes. The option to simulate these is a godsend. Still, making them more fun (like those in Virtua Tennis) and less deadpan would've been our preference. Repeatedly peppering a punchbag is exhilarating in real life, but it's never translated to videogames well, and this continues the trend.

Based on aesthetics alone you're going to hear all sorts of praise for Fight Night Round 4 over the coming weeks. Much of the evangelising is completely justified – when it's good, it's absolutely bloody brilliant. But the deeper you delve, the tougher it is to ignore its few flaws, the sometimes spongy punching

being the most problematic.

That said, it's still a quality sports game, and you have to play it if only to sample its incredible visuals. Be prepared to yell "wow". A lot.

Ben Wilson



A commendable round from EA's big contender, but THQ's MMA game takes the title on points.





Turns out the Wild West would've been loads more fun with sniper rifles.

Mild west

Call Of Juarez Bound In Blood

Cowboys and inaccurate aiming

Christ, this is grim. Being in the Old West should be all about riding horses across rolling plains, and cool music, and being able to see in more than three hard-to-distinguish shades of grey. Call Of Juarez isn't a bad shooter, but it sure is a dark and unattractive one.

The story has an appropriately Old West blood-and-thunder hook to it, with the three McCall brothers – the youngest a preacher, the others outlaws – on the run after deserting the Confederate army during the American Civil war. Tougher siblings Thomas and Ray are playable (Psalms-boy narrates the meandering plot and preaches ineffectually while his brothers murder hundreds of men), and can be selected at the start of each level (some are only playable as one of them).

As the brothers are both lank-haired amoral thugs and equally unlikeable, the only real differences between them are their weapons specialties. Ray is the older and snarlier of the two, has a pair of

Like this?
Play these



Red Dead Revolver
Rockstar's PS2 gunslinger. Showing its age, but ace story.
VERDICT 8



Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare
Synonymous with brilliant shooting. If you want to fire a gun on PS3, this is your man.
VERDICT 10

stabby knives and can dual-wield pistols. Tom has a rifle which makes him more effective at range, and a lasso for infrequent and clumsily-signposted puzzley bits (Climb this! Swing over that!).

He ain't heavy

Unless you're actually using the specialist weapons, the brothers *feel* exactly the same to play. The core shooting – solid, a little heavy – is identical for both, and has a familiar setup. It's **[L1]** to aim, **[R1]** to fire, unless you're holding two pistols in which case you can't zoom and **[L1]** fires the second gun instead. The period revolvers and rifles fizz off rounds with an enjoyable gun powder crack, and though it's a bit cumbersome it all, you know, *works*.

Just about, anyway. Both auto and sticky aim are activated as default, and outrageously powerful. Move the reticule from left to right over a group of enemy soldiers and it jumps to the nearest one then stays there. This feels intrusively

automated (it'll screw up your aim as often as help it), but the downside to turning these aids off is that you'll struggle to hit anything at all. Partly this is because the people, clothes and locations are so relentlessly grey-brown that bad guys are hard to pick out. But it's also because enemies move with unrealistic momentum (stop, go, stop, 'Gah!') and are hard to catch, especially since many seemingly good shots fail to register. Past the first few levels, when enemies require multiple bullets before going down, this gets tired real fast.

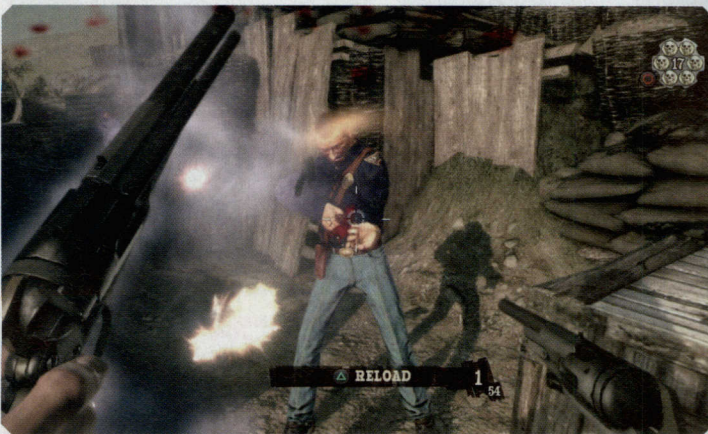
It also makes the regular fighting bits tricky, even though they're basically a series of shooting galleries – three guys in a barn, two guys in an alley behind a cart – linked by linear corridors. (There are occasional banal side-missions, like hunting down a Mexican outlaw at his compound, but it's essentially a long on-rails progression through narrow environments and generic, 'tached



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub
Ubisoft Dev Techland Players
1-12 Web callofjuarez.uk.ubi.
com It's like Playing Red Dead
Revolver with sunglasses on.

❑ The shotgun has a range of roughly three centimetres.



▲ Fill up the chambers in the top right of the screen to activate a slo-mo shooting mode.

villains.) To swing the odds in your favour Ray and Tom have a charge-and-release special move called Concentration mode. Each kill you notch up fills a six-shooter chamber in the top-right of the screen – once you've filled all six you can activate a short slo-mo targeting sequence.

It's an idea robbed from Red Dead Revolver, with variations. In Tom's version you scan for enemies, with the reticule automatically tagging each one you hover over before releasing a stupid quick volley of bullets to each marker. Ray's is even more hands-off: hold **R1** and pull the right stick back repeatedly like you're cocking a gun – a nice match-on-action spoiled by the fact that each round auto-homes to any visible enemy. A third co-op version is the best, where at set points the brothers burst through doorways like an uglier-up Butch and Sundance, with twin crosshairs tracking across the screen controlled with the left and right sticks and fired



▲ The brothers are like a frontier Kane and Lynch – so horrible they're little fun to play.

with **R1** and **L1**. It's smart and tough, and for once you're in control.

The problem with these screen-clearing special moves is that rather than even out the difficulty, they throw it out of whack. You have bits where you can't hit anyone, then brief flashes of invulnerability. It makes for an uneven experience, compounded by lame checkpoint positioning ('I'm watching this cut-scene

again?'). A shame, because there's a technically solid shooter here somewhere, hidden beneath ugliness and questionable design. **Nathan Ditum**

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

6

BluMovies

HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



Mad Men Season 2

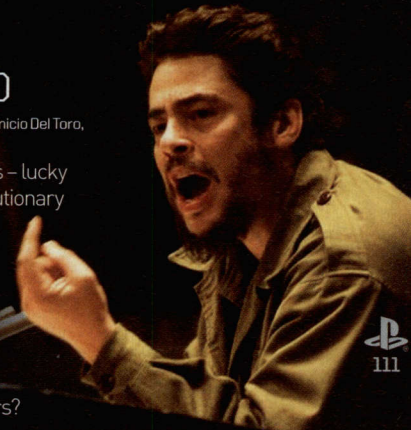
Director Various Starring Jon Hamm, Christina Hendricks **ETA** 13 July

Now there's no room left on The Wire bandwagon, the US series to be into is Mad Men. No guns and drugs, just quiet despair and killer performances as the Madison Avenue suits struggle to come to terms with the arrival of the '60s and their own tangled sex lives.

Che Parts One and Two

Director Steven Soderbergh Starring Benicio Del Toro, Julia Ormond **ETA** 29 July

The guy behind Traffic presents – lucky us – a four-hour biopic of revolutionary poster boy Che Guevara. In two parts, but still. The film itself is everything you'd expect from one of the smartest directors working in Hollywood – intelligent, engaging – and Del Toro is big as the main man. But four hours?



Marley And Me

Director David Frankel Starring Owen Wilson, Jennifer Aniston **ETA** Out now

Wilson's journo everyman doesn't want kids, so he buys pup Marley to trick his wife's ravenous womb. For the rest of the film he chases/shouts at/hugs the dog, while the wife (Aniston) looks a bit tired and has babies anyway. Sickening, but in all likelihood you'll still well up at the end thanks to all the shameless tearjerky.



Movie of the month Ghostbusters

Director Ivan Reitman Starring Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd **ETA** Out now

Playing the game last month made us super excited about the 'Busters heading for Blu-ray, and the movie doesn't disappoint. It's aged unusually well for such an SFX-reliant film, mostly because the smart, gag-heavy script made it such a hit in the first place. A full-on classic.



Rock Band Unplugged

Of course there's no plug – there are no *instruments*

There's plenty wrong with Rock Band, even if it is a great game. The giant cluster of plastic crap that accumulates in your living room, for instance. Or the idiotic clichés spouted by grown adults ("That's actually like playing the drums, isn't it? I mean, that's probably a transferable skill...").

But the main problem with the four-piece setup is that the instruments aren't equal. The bass guitar is too easy. The drums are, you know, repetitive. And there are only three songs worth singing. Unplugged solves all this by ditching the singing completely, and having you play *all* the instruments. At once.

By the numbers

Songs on the UMD	41
Songs out of the opening lineup that I actually wanted to play through	3
Seconds of Sting's music you can play to a prisoner before Amnesty get involved	16
The year the oldest song, Jethro Tull's Aqualung, was originally released	1971
Number of Jacksons it's okay to like	4
The year Harmonix first used the 'phrases' idea in Frequency	2001
Fans I lost because I restarted the track when some idiot started talking to me	3

Setlist

The Killers



Mr Brightside

Rock Band veteran, worth a punt even now thanks to still-strong 'killer' riff.

Pearl Jam



Alive

'Whooooo AAHM still erive'. Very much so, Mr Vedder, very much so.

Foo Fighters



Everlong

Furious, amazing and emotional post-grunge classic. DRUMS! DRUMS!

If that sounds a bit much, there's a simple workaround – you only have to successfully play a 'phrase' of each instrument, and then it'll automatically play itself for a few bars, while you hop from fret to fret using the shoulder buttons to play similar phrases on all the other instruments. To use the irresistibly obvious metaphor, you're spinning musical plates.

Artistic differences

Do it right, and you'll straddle all aspects of the band like a headbanging metal colossus. Miss a note, and you'll get another chance to try the phrase – meanwhile, the grace you've bought yourself on the other instruments will start to run out. On Expert level, the game quickly changes from perfection-sniping to frantic damage limitation. But it's a system that boils the full band into a single-player experience very well – jumping from one rhythmic pattern to another adds a level of variety that's often absent from the full game.

The problem that



Four instruments? Easy. Skip between them, one at a time, to keep the song going.



Band customisation. Nath wanted to call his group Wangs On Fire, but was shouted down.



Info

Format PSP **ETA** Out now **Pub** EA
Dev Harmonix/Backbone Ent
Players 1 **Web** rockband.com
It's like Spinning plates to an unsuccessfully eclectic soundtrack.

Harmonix is wrestling with is one that's entirely out of its control. Unfortunately, it's a fundamental one: you're playing Rock Band on a PSP. Nothing makes you feel less like an tormented axe-wielding denizen of hell than holding your hands nine inches apart and looking at your knees. If it was a tiny downhill car simulator, you'd be in the perfect position – but Rock Band and Guitar Hero both trade on the absurd kudos that comes from rocking a fat plastic guitar.

It's also worth googling the full tracklist to see if your own peculiar tastes are catered for. For me, the enjoyable songs (like Judas Priest's Painkiller and the Foo Fighters' Guitar Hero regular Everlong) are overshadowed by weaker selections. Social Distortion's I Was Wrong is inoffensively bland, but Message In A Bottle is taking it a step too far. No one has the right to ask

you to slide earphones into your head – your precious head, where you keep all your thoughts and dirty dreams – and then pipe Message In A Bottle into you. It's inhumane.

Jon Blyth





Harm sandwich

Pain

It's gonna hurt him more than it hurts you

Costing just £4.99 plus the price of whichever extras you choose, it's no surprise that Pain is the most downloaded PSN game of all time. But does it work on Blu-ray? For this disc you're paying a set amount (£19.99) to get a specific batch of content: five stages (Downtown, Amusement Park, Movie Lot, Area 69 and Morningwood High School Gym) and 18 characters. It's entirely redundant if you already own the game, but a great package otherwise – although omitting David Hasselhoff, the game's one genuinely world-famous character, is a bit naughty.

Somethin' kinda Ooch

The main mode, Painedemonium, is simply about racking up as high a score as possible by bouncing your character off objects, people, and scenery. Key to continuing your go is getting yourself propelled by bumping into explosives (in the form of boxes or barrels) and using the Ooch bar at the foot of the screen. Yes, that's right, the Ooch bar. Each letter, when white, represents the ability to nudge your guy or gal by pressing a direction on the D-pad. And by shaking the DualShock you can earn Super Ooch once per turn, which makes your nudges travel further. It's as brilliant as it is stupid.

You get bonus points and

Info
Format PS3 ETA Out now
Pub Sony Dev SCEA San Diego
Players 1-4 Web snipurl.com/
ijx84 It's like Jackass, in game
form, and much funnier.



▲ Amusement Park is Pain's most exciting and destructive environment. "Not the face!"

multipliers for 'achievements' like twanging your character in the nadgers, and any part of the scenery is fair game – to the point that you'll laugh and wince at the same time when he or she goes plummeting into a plate glass window or gets dragged around by a rollercoaster. While each stage contains a batch of mini-games for added value (like the self-explanatory Bowling and Fun With Explosives, where your only objective is to string together as many big bangs as possible), it's the main mode that'll keep you coming back for its blend of juvenile humour

and must-better-my-high-score compulsivity. And if you really want Hoff, you can always buy him from the Store. Still cheeky, mind.

Ben Wilson



JapanWatch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell

Blazblue Calamity Trigger

Format PS3 Pub Arc System Works Subtitles No



Not unlike my ex, this hi-def beat-'em-up's MO is to bewitch with otherworldly beauty before filling your life with exquisitely choreographed hurt and betrayal. Similarly, it will also make you its weary, red-eyed slave, making sleep a receding memory until you move back to your mum's. The bitch.



Rorona no Atelier Arland no Renkinjutsushi

Format PS3 Pub Gust Subtitles No



Like me, you probably think you're pretty cultured; a distillation of all the aspirational merchandise of the last decade. So how come you've never played the previous ten games in the alchemical object-synthesising Atelier series? Anybody would think you prefer your turn-based combat without lengthy preambles in the chemistry lab.



Bamboo Blade Sorekara no Chousen

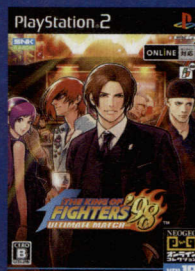
Format PSP Pub Gadget Soft Subtitles No



High School Kendo instructor Toraji Ishida is my kind of hero – a man so crippled by poverty that his last shreds of self-respect are as distant as the horizon. It's against this backdrop that the hero of Bamboo Blade agrees to a take a fellow instructor's bet that he can't cobble together a decent female Kendo team. Noble? Hardly – he's doing it for a year's supply of sushi.



Exotic Boxart Of The Month



King Of Fighters '98 Ultimate Match

The merest glance at that sharp-suited male model/commodities broker with his glass of 1787 Chateau Lafitte and I start to feel violent.



SNK Arcade Classics Vol 1

Ball sports, super heroes, gay-friendly space battles. The only disappointment here is that they don't all appear in the same game.



Nishimura Kyoutarou Travel Mystery: Akugyaku no Kisetu Tokyo Nanki Shirahama Ranzoku Satsujin Jiken Nice train.

❑ The Dust Storm buggies are light, fun to drive and *really* easy to crash.



New territory

Burnout Paradise Big Surf Island

Leave the ratrace behind for this place in the sun

Big Surf Island is that extra little twist that makes an already brilliant thing just a little better. Like relish on a sizzling, fist-sized burger, or no clothes on a beautiful woman. As well as Burnout Paradise's regular features – billboards to smash, stunt runs to ace, jumps to master – the Big Surf Island DLC brings with it new cars, new roads and new challenges which makes the whole package even more beautiful and, crucially, more fun to play.

Upon arriving on the island, either by selecting it from the revamped menu or heading over the Paradise Keys suspension bridge, you're given the Dust Storm – a fast, bouncy buggy, and the best of the nine new vehicles. Along with this comes a brand new island licence to complete which, as well as all the normal race events and takedown challenges,

Dev talk



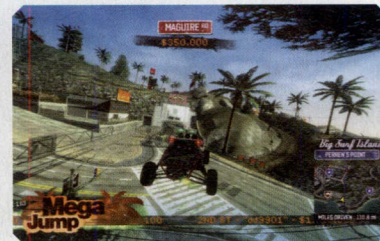
"This is a business model. We have to find the right balance between free content to reward our community, and premium content."

Pete Lake
Producer
Criterion Games

gives you access to a set of island tour events. These are designed to show off the island at its best, featuring huge jumps and requiring you to zip around the palm tree-lined roads at colossal speeds in order to complete checkpoint-based races. The checkpoint system has been overhauled, too – present in all the island race events, each point is now marked by a beam of light stretching skywards, visible from several streets away. It's not the onscreen mini-map GPS we've been hankering for, but it does make it easier to plan a route than the blink-and-you're-dead flashing street name mechanic. The system is ace – which makes it even sadder that it hasn't been retrospectively added to the main game's events.

Burn, baby, burn

On top of that there's a ton of online-only content to bolster what's already one of PS3's strongest online games. Surf Island's streets are open to the usual Showtime and Time road rules events, and it also offers ten new freeburn challenges such as '1 spiral' (drifting up the



❑ Mega jumps are like super jumps but, you know, more mega. There are 15 in total.



❑ The new Hunter Olympus Governor flies like a brick and steers only a little better. Bosh.



❑ There's a sort of skate park half-pipe setup for doing stunts. If you're not rubbish at stunts.



Info

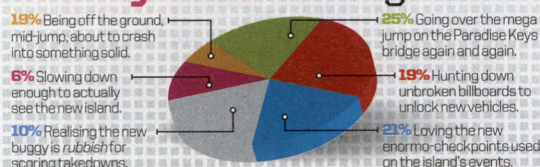
Format PSN download **ETA** Out now
Pub EA Dev Criterion Games 1-8
Web criteriongames.com **It's like**
Finding a bit more of PS3's best racer
down the back of the sofa.

narrow lanes of a multi-storey car park) and 'jumping donuts' (somewhat predictably requiring you to jump through a huge, doughnut-shaped sign).

Given the mass of free content Criterion has added to Burnout, the recent £7.99 Cops And Robbers pack may have come as a disappointment. But this colourful playground restores the balance. Big Surf is all about having fun on a trip away from the big city. And apart from not offering cocktails by the beach and a little holiday roll in the sand with a Spanish waitress, it delivers. At £9.99 it's not cheap, but there's enough

here to keep you on the island for weeks – way more material than the existing premium DLC. After all, there's no such thing as a free holiday. Cough up, download, and enjoy. **James Jarvis**

What you do in... Big Surf





Monster Hunter Freedom Unite

The little RPG that's *really* big in Japan

Alright, there's got to be something going on here – PSP's Monster Hunter series might only have raised a smattering of interest in Europe and the US, but in Japan it's a phenomenon, having sold somewhere north of five million copies. Five *million*. What's the deal?

The hook is simple: levelling-up, earning better gear, and generally feeling like you're always on the road to some sort of intangible success (even if you're really just massing bigger numbers in the game's stats database). If you've tried the super addictive PC MMO World Of Warcraft, you'll know exactly how this feels – the constant pull of one more kill, one more mission, one more upgrade.

Addictive beast

The big difference with Monster Hunter is that it's offline – it can be played single-player, or with up to three friends over ad-hoc wireless. This opens up the life-ruining potential to grind and quest anywhere, at any time – slaughtering dozens of deer-like Anteka or pink gorilla Congas, and carving their bodies into raw material for the game's super complex combination system (using which you can craft stats-boosting armour and weapons, potions, and handy incidentals



Info

Format PSP ETA Out now Price £7.99
Capcom Dev Capcom Players 1-4 Web monsterhunter-freedomunite.com It's like World Of Warcraft on PSP.



▲ Fighting the tougher bosses on your own can be a miserable, panicked disaster.

such as bombs and tranquillisers.)

Playing with four is the most fun. There's an incredible depth to the strategy when taking on the meaner bosses, which you need human players to appreciate – co-ordinating attacks with tougher characters distracting a monster while range-attack comrades do damage from distance. An obvious drawback is that the realistic chances of you finding regular quest-mates is slim, unless the game explodes in the UK. Another is that the three-button combat (△ and ○ to hack or slash, RT to block) has no lock-on, which

means a whole lot of turning and centring the camera with L1. Still, once you're hooked – and if you play this, you will be hooked – you won't care.

Nathan Ditum



PlayList

Essential tunes to download this month

La Roux La Roux

Format Album ETA Out now Price £7.99

Reviving not just the plinky plonk sounds but also the epically gelled hair of the 1980s, La Roux are at the vanguard of this year's electro-pop wave. Luckily, this isn't just forced nostalgia; it's equal parts crisp beats and bare emotion. A winning combination. laroux.co.uk



Titus Andronicus Upon Viewing Bruegel's 'Landscape With The Fall Of Icarus'

Format Track ETA Out now Price £0.79

Titling a song in honour of a painting by one of the Dutch masters would typically mark your band out as tedious chin-stroking aesthetes. But these New Jersey reprobates play ramalama rock'n'roll with a sense of drama any Bard would slay for. titusandronicus.net



Gossip Music For Men

Format Album ETA Out now Price £7.99

Beth Ditto and friends barrel back with an album of gospel-tinged rock, their first since 2006's breakout Standing In The Way Of Control. The sharper edges have been smoothed, but Ditto's voice is still big and brassy, and the likes of Heavy Cross ought to get even the shyest dancefloor twitching. thegossipmusic.com



Download of the month Noisettes Never Forget You

Format Track ETA Out now Price £0.79

Formerly punky rascals in a Yeah Yeah Yeahs vein, London's Noisettes rebrand themselves as Winehouse-style crooners, Shingai Shoniwa unfurling her remarkable soul voice over strutting beats and soaring strings. Sounds like a band finding their true calling. noisettes.net



Classic sneakers

Metal Gear Solid

The big daddy of stealth jumps from the shadows

Yes, it's still as good as ever. After a slight crisis of confidence during the chunky opening sequence, it only takes one deftly-applied chokehold to remind you why Metal Gear Solid caused a revolution and inspired an entire generation of copycat stealth actioners: because it's amazing to play.

Still solid

Compared to its various sequels, the plot of MGS is super simple: grizzly retired soldier Snake infiltrates a weapons disposal facility to stop terrorists launching a nuclear strike. One of the best things about coming back to it now is that age lowers your expectations: even if you've played it before, it'll still have a surprise for you. When I re-fought twisted mind-reader Psycho Mantis (think an S&M Derren Brown) and had to switch controller ports to avoid his psychic powers, it

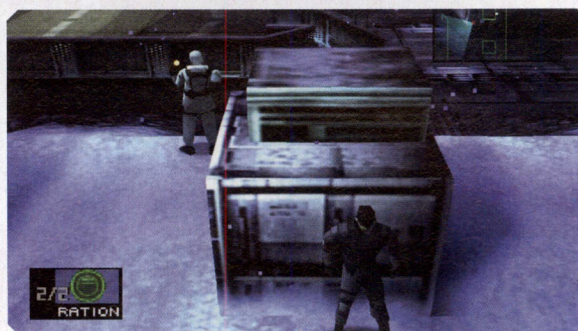
felt daring and imaginative in a way new triple-A titles would never even attempt. Sure, it's easy to be nostalgic about a game as influential as this, but there's still a huge amount of depth here. And weighing it up against the competition, for eight quid you're getting an epic narrative that's as deep and fulfilling as anything else on the Store, old or new.

Criticisms? That story is a little harder to take seriously without the smoothly lip-synced cut-scenes of more recent times, and the lofty attempts to be cinematic will frustrate some, as will the basic limitations of the two-generations-old controls. And, yes, these days it looks like playing MGS4 on analogue Teletext,

even if the visuals were amazing at the time. But if you can't forgive these shortcomings, it's your loss. For those who can, it's still as shocking, tense and enjoyable as it was 11 years ago. **Matt Elliott**



Info
Format PSN download **Pub** Konami
Dev Konami **ETA** Out now **Players**
1 Web uk.playstation.com **It's like**
Playing MGS4 with old man's eyes.



▶ Like old man Snake, MGS looks ancient, but is still strong underneath.

OAP RPG

Final Fantasy VII

Overrated waste of a week, or genre-defining classic?

As a newcomer to Final Fantasy VII, you'd be forgiven for thinking that it looks, well, a bit rubbish. The pudgy characters resemble Playmobil toys that have been left too close to the fire, and they waddle around the (admittedly very lovely) 2D landscape like fleshy pinballs. It's quite surprising then, that after only a few hours' play, you'll be obsessed to the point of

sleeplessness with the adventures of these expressionless little lumps.

A good turn

By today's standards, gameplay can seem disappointingly linear, and the random, turn-based battles are the stuff of stop-start nightmares (all but the most stubborn of modern RPGs have done away with them now). But it's worth sucking it all up, because there's tons here to recommend: a complex, twisting plot about mega-villain Sephiroth's apocalyptic plan for world domination, and excellent characterisation that's seen heroes Cloud and Aeris become the stuff of geek legend. And, although they've dated, the MIDI music and beautiful pre-rendered backdrops actually make FFFVII more endearing – stick on some Britpop and it's like going on holiday to 1997. Sad, aging smiley face.

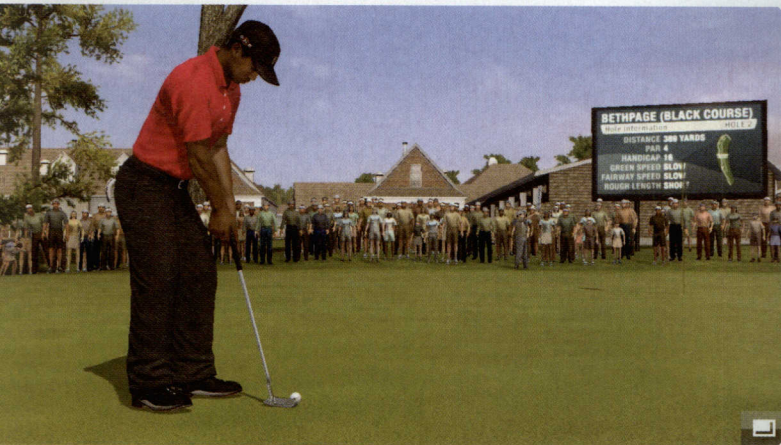


Info
Format PSN download **Pub** Square
Enix Dev Square Enix **ETA** Out now
Players 1 Web uk.playstation.com
It's like Falling for your girlfriend's
mum thanks to her glowing personality.

The bottom line is that FFFVII has and always will divide opinion. As an RPG it stands up – with the exception of Valkyria Chronicles, today's top-line role-players (Persona 4, Disgaea 3) are still modest lookers, so Final Fantasy's fat polygons aren't the sore thumb they might have been. The real question is whether you want to spend money (£7.99) on a game that engages with story and character rather than action. If you want instantly gratifying gun-porn, this was never meant for you. If you want to be touched by an epic and amusing story, FFFVII will be as playable in 20 years' time as it is now. **Matt Elliott**



▶ Cloud gets his chopper out during a messy fight.



Little birdie

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10

Still a contender after all these years

Whether it's indiscriminately massacring foreign children in Call Of Duty 4, or healing every gammy citizen you come across in inFamous, we're all sluts for XP. There's no driving force quite like it – the knowledge that around the next corner, just a few minutes away, is the promise of a new sniper scope, electro-shock attack, or pair of plus-fours.

It's XP that saves new Tiger Woods. Just. It starts slow – improvements to graphics and gameplay are at first glance barely noticeable, and when I tried to start a career mode, a 15-minute wrestle with the game's face creator left me looking like Joseph Merrick of the fairways. But then that first glittering star of XP appears, thanks to a long drive, or a parred hole. Your first paycheck comes though. You buy your first bit of golfing bling – and suddenly you're hooked into the irresistible urge to level up, and buy every last ridiculous item in the store.

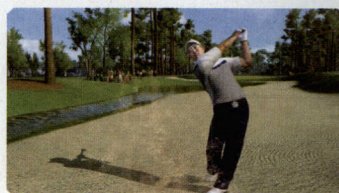
Animal desire

It's this that will haul you past any initial doubts and keep you playing until you can appreciate what Tiger 10 brings to the series. It's still technically superb – the right stick swing control is probably the last word in how to play golf games on a pad –



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now
Pub EA Dev EA Tiburon
Players 1-4 Web easports.com/
tigerwoods10 It's like Tiger
Woods 09 with a few extra
bells and whistles.



▲ Wedging out of bunkers is a definite skill. One we're still totally rubbish at. Sigh.

and there's the usual round of tweaks, best of which is the inclusion of a new precision putting system which does away with the idea of judging distance, in favour of basing your shot on the contours of the green. It sounds unwieldy, but works elegantly.

So the game itself is still accomplished and addictive, but as with all the recent Tigers, the real acid test will be the online play. At the time of writing, the Tiger servers still haven't gone live, but real-time weather conditions and large

multiplayer tournaments are on the cards, and sound like dangerously addictive prospects.

We'll have a full online review next month.

David Boddington



Straight to bargain bin

With Nathan Ditum

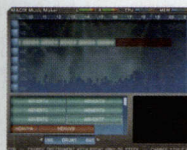


I'm all for people putting out ambitious mainstream games on the PlayStation Network, but only under the not-unreasonable condition that they're not rubbish. Trying to make a first-person shooter with the kind of budgets thrown around on the Store seems a lot like trying to build a stealth bomber out of balsa and elastic bands. So, nice try, **Cellfactor: Psychokinetic Wars**, but ultimately, GTFO. It plays like Unreal Tournament with extra ugly and some psychic powers. The aiming is fiddly, the physics horribly basic, and the Force-style bin-lobbing isn't half as satisfying as it should be. And because a piece of throwable detritus appears when you activate these powers, even when you're in a totally empty bit of the map, it looks unnervingly like you're pulling them out of your backside.

Maybe I wasn't looking hard enough (a *distinct* possibility) but there's no sign of Tim Westwood anywhere in **Pimp My Ride Street Racing**.

Though, to be fair, there's only the barest hint of actual racing, too, so in a way it makes sense.

Predictably, the whole thing's a lot like an ugly version of Midnight Club made by fingerless monkeys, with gaudy neon races offering the chance to win 'scrilla' (which to my white middle class shame I had to look up on Urban Dictionary – it means money) and use it to buy tacky bits of crap to stick on the side of your brick-like car. Technically it's without major fault, but actually playing it is fun like scooping up a run-over dog.



After 20 minutes of strumming idiotically on a Guitar Hero fender and making a noise like a real guitar being eaten by a starving cat, I was all ready to give **Music Maker: Rockstar** a bit of a kicking. But then James took over and made a whole, real song and accompanying video in half the time it'd taken me to achieve nothing at all, and I realised that the problem lay with me rather than the game. Music Maker isn't flashy – at times it looks like a debug menu, with grey pop-up screens and blocky courier font – but it includes a sampler, a drum machine, a six-track mixing facility and a video editor. The basic presentation stops it from being amazing, but it's a long way from being rubbish – it's a proper, complex bit of software. The only real problem I have is that the whole guitar thing on the cover – 'Your guitar controller becomes a *real instrument!*' – is a bit of a red herring. It's actually easier, but less glamorous, to just use the pad.

Abomination of the month

I half expect that if I pulled the side panel off the **Coraline** engine I'd find a pair of startled hamsters on a squeaky running wheel. Certainly, that would explain the quality of the cut-scenes, which not only include woeful screen-tearing and jagged lines, but also weird patches of green which randomly appear on our heroine's face. The game itself is full of infuriating fixed camera positions and busy work fetch quests – like a survival horror for kids, only not surviving seems like it'd be more fun. Early on I inexplicably found a goal and a bunch of footballs in Coraline's loft and spent most of my time bumping the ball closer to the net using the game's certifiably blind collision detection. Which was rubbish, but more fun than actually playing the thing.



Moving target

Prinny Can I Really Be The Hero?

Go on, pick up a penguin



Info

Format PSP **ETA** Out now **Pub** Koei
Dev Nippon Ichi **Players** 1-4 **Web**
prinny.com **It's like** All the wit and
weirdness of Disgaea, with none of
the strategy.

Like a kitten with a Kalashnikov, this perky platformer is cute, deadily and likely to upset animal lovers. You play as a Prinny, a race of magical penguins from the Disgaea universe, sent on a quest to find a supernatural pudding (called the Ultra Dessert). When you die – which you will do a lot, at the hands of apple-headed demons, psychopathic tree stumps and lakes of lava – your cutesy hero is simply replaced by another identical Prinny. Luckily, the wit and weirdness makes every death rattle worth it.

In the Disgaea RPGs, Prinnyes are creatures who explode when thrown at the enemy. This spin off ditches the

strategy in favour of jumps and battling. Each perfectly bonkers kingdom, from spooky woods to watery worlds, is packed with enemies and always has a boss or two waiting for a rumble.

Fowl play

It's a wicked little world to get lost in, but it's also hard as nails. Any contact with an enemy costs you a life, and each one fights differently. Your Prinny has three attacks – basic, aerial and crashing jump – and beating even the weediest contender means learning their attack pattern and exploiting it with precise timing. Add to that a jump mechanic that gives you no control over where you

land and you'll be going though penguins quicker than a killer whale canteen. Lighthearted, loveably manic, and shamelessly fun, this is a great fit for PSP.

Rachel Penny



Defeating crazed pigs is one thing, mastering double jumps is quite another.

Plucky wanderer

Sacred 2 Fallen Angel

Orcs, norks and battle-axes



Info

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Koch
Dev Ascaron **Players** 1-4 **Web**
sacred2.com **It's like** The runty
younger sibling of Oblivion, that's
not as pretty or well designed.

So, you're bored of giant underground caverns riddled with dank corridors and Tolkien orcs? Then you're tired of life. Or, at least, tired of miserably generic RPG slugfests. I won't lie to you, Sacred 2 does have its fair share of murky brown passageways, but unlike most fantasy crawlers, it's not afraid to get out into the sun. As soon as you've built your custom hero (Class: unattainably elfin. Hair: fiery red. Boobs: statuesque) you're free to roam all over Sacred 2's surprisingly bright and green world of Ancaria.

Seriously, all over it. The game is designed to be open, so rather than have you unlock sections of the map



Every character looks like an extra from World Of Warcraft.



one by one, the game's enemies level up in step with your character wherever you decide to wander. It removes the traditional challenge of level-up-and-move-along, but it also means you can explore, confident that you're not automatically going to run into an instant death situation.

Which is nice.

Aside from exploring, it's all about killing things – hooded bandits, giant

Competition

Win one of ten copies of the Sacred 2 Collectors' Edition! To enter, correctly answer this question: What is the only character class in Sacred 2 that was also in the original PC game Sacred? a) Dryad b) Seraphim c) Temple Guardian. Text: RPG then your answer followed by your name and address to 87474 or enter at futurecomps.co.uk/sacred. See www.futurecomps.com for full terms and conditions. Closing date 3 August 2009.

beetles, winged harpy beasts – and completing quests. You can have dozens of errands on the go at once, from recovering the jewellery of a murdered man for his widow, to protecting a farmer's cattle from pesky wolves. Your world map is filled with pinprick destinations to seek out, and narrative threads to follow.

On the surface it appears off-puttingly PC-centric, with fiddly graphics and a desperately hardcore fantasy feel. But it's way more enjoyable than the screens can ever explain – the tongue-in-cheek script ensures it never takes itself too seriously, and anyone who played Blizzard's Diablo on PS1 will know how

moreish the mix of levelling and combat can be. In the end, Sacred 2's a bit like the nerdy girl in your class at school – embarrassing to be seen with, but basically loads of geeky fun. **Simon Parkin**

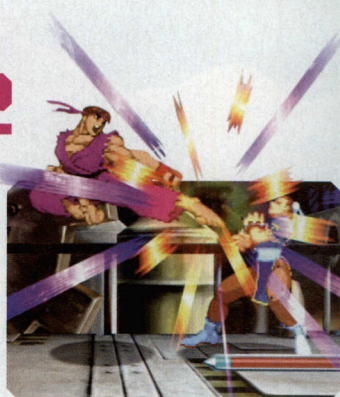


Marvel vs Capcom 2

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now **Pub** Capcom



MVC2 is a fluoro-coated spin-off of Street Fighter II, with two key differences in addition to the garish palette. As well as the likes of Ryu and Chun-Li it packs a mixture of Capcom faves (Mega Man, Resi's Jill Valentine) plus superheroes and villains (Wolverine, Doctor Doom). And fights are three-on-three, which makes for likeably hectic tag team and multi-move action, to the point of distraction if you don't get the controls and methodology of



teamwork down pat. While it's fun to see big-name comic stars paired with gaming faves, it's outplayed by SSFII HD Remix – its £11.99 price is a pretty tough blow to your wallet too. **Ben Wilson**



Cross Edge

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Koei



In Japan, this might be the equivalent of having Hulk Hogan and Hitler rappelling from Airwolf into Buckingham Palace to punch the Queen: there are characters from six games, from five developers, spanning genres as diverse as RPG, brawler, and turn-based strategy. The result is an incredibly slow-paced grind of a strategic combat RPG, with high level caps and ridiculous HP limits. It's usually lazy to say things like 'if you loved Disgaea, Darkstalkers, Spectral



Souls, and all the others, you'll love this' – but when a game is such blatant fan service, it's a necessity. You can enjoy it without playing the other games first, but there's a good chance you wouldn't understand a thing. **Jon Blyth**



Dynasty Warriors 6 Empires

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Koei



There is a stage, with Dynasty Warriors, where you look back at all the people you've killed in the game – many of whom bought it during your last, outrageous Infinite Renbu combo – and wonder if you shouldn't be doing something a little more cerebral. Empires throws a strategy bone to your nagging swot, and lets you be a Ronin or ruler, with a tactical world overview. If you were perfectly happy simply slaughtering everyone, then you



can remain a peasant and play like you're used to. With a huge world of characters, music, and the return of Edit mode, Empires is a fine addition to a flagging empire. **Jon Blyth**



Release Schedule

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you

	Publisher	ETA	Format
G-Force	Disney	24 Jul	PS3
GI Joe The Rise Of Cobra	EA	31 Jul	Multi
Ashes Cricket 2009	Codemasters	7 Aug	PS3
Wolfenstein	Activision	7 Aug	PS3
Madden NFL 10	EA	14 Aug	Multi
Batman: Arkham Asylum	Eidos	28 Aug	PS3
Cross Edge	Koei	28 Aug	PS3
The King Of Fighters XII	Ignition	28 Aug	PS3
The Beatles: Rock Band	EA	9 Sep	PS3
Need For Speed Shift	EA	18 Sep	PS3
The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	LucasArts	18 Sep	Multi
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	Square Enix	Sep	PSP
Colin McRae Dirt 2	Codemasters	Sep	PS3
FIFA 10	EA	Sep	Multi
Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs	Ubisoft	Sep	PS3/PSP
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	Sony	Sep	PS2/PS3
Mini Ninjas	Eidos	Sep	PS3
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	Codemasters	Sep	PS3
Singularity	Activision	Sep	PS3
Gran Turismo	Sony	2 Oct	PSP
Brutal Legend	EA	16 Oct	PS3
Borderlands	Take Two	Oct	PS3
Dark Void	Capcom	Oct	PS3
F1 2009	Codemasters	Oct	PSP
I Am Alive	Ubisoft	Oct	PS3
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	Sony	Oct	PS3
Assassin's Creed 2	Ubisoft	17 Nov	PS3
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	Ubisoft	Nov	PSP
Avatar	Ubisoft	Nov	PS3
Bioshock 2	Take Two	Nov	PS3
Mafia II	Take Two	Nov	PS3
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	Sony	Nov	PS3
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	Nov	PS3
WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2010	THQ	Nov	PS3
Dead To Rights: Retribution	Namco Bandai	Dec	PS3
Battlefield Bad Company 2	EA	Dec	PS3
Gran Turismo 5	Sony	Dec	PS3
White Knight Chronicles	Sony	Dec	PS3
Brink	Bethesda	Mar 10	PS3
God Of War III	Sony	Mar 10	PS3
Just Cause 2	Eidos	2010	PS3
Final Fantasy XIII	Square Enix	2010	PS3
Heavy Rain	Sony	2010	PS3

! All release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to change.



READY MADE EXCUSE #33

Pull a sickie for... Need For Speed Shift

“This guy at work got some dodgy chocolates from the States. Full of zinc apparently – I can't see out of my left eye. It'll be a week, minimum.”



■ "If I close my eyes and count to ten maybe all this will disappear and I'll be safely tucked up in bed." Another tactic that doesn't cut it playing UFC online.

Shooting stars

UFC 2009 Undisputed

Get your head right or you're going down *fast*

UFC
UNDISPUTED

Info

Format PS3 **ETA**
Out now **Pub** THQ
Dev Yuke's **Players**
1-2 **Web** ufc09.com
It's like All the terror of real fighting, none of the inconvenient pain or emergency rhinoplasty.

Ken Shamrock, veteran mixed martial artist and fighting showman, once said to his nemesis Tito Ortiz before a fight, "I want to beat you into a living death." It's this kind of sportsmanship among the fans and contestants in UFC that makes it such an electric experience to watch, and makes THQ's brilliantly realistic game so good to play. And online, against other real people who want to reshape your face, is where Undisputed really comes alive.

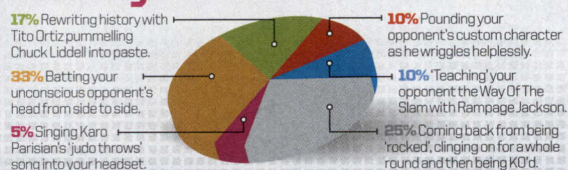
There are no unnecessary extras in the online mode; connection is relatively

quick and lag-free. The menus are as lean and functional as Georges St-Pierre, with choices limited to ranked and unranked matches. If you want to just dip in for a bit of ultra violence then the player match enables you to do so without your standing being affected. But after you've eaten some punches and choked out a few opponents you'll want to test your skills where it matters: ranked matches.

The presentation of the ranked matches makes you feel like the headliner on a UFC pay-per-view. Before each bout you're given a few lines of info about how your opponent fights, such as whether they favour striking or grappling, and the length of their winning streak. Just like studying a real fighter before a match, you start to develop a game plan – thinking about using your knees to defend against a surprise shot if they like to go to ground early, for instance.

It isn't just pretend strategising – it actually means something. Human players don't run in with stock moves that work against the computer. They watch, wait, and attack when they can gain the advantage. Reckless rushing will see you on your back before UFC announcer Bruce Buffer has finished reading out your name (during one match playing as Rampage Jackson, I foolishly started the final round by shooting in on Forrest Griffin only to be met with a knee to the head and ended up smiling at the auditorium roof doing a sort of unconscious jazz hands). Instead of concentrating on your own game, deciding what special moves to pull out, man-on-man fights encourage you to spend more time observing your opponent before exploiting their weaknesses. Well-timed punches send your foe to the canvas, and a successful clinch can suck all the momentum out of your opponent's striking game,

What you do in... UFC 2009





▲ Human fighters are far more likely to punish daft rushes.



▲ Plan A: Patient sparring before surprise shoot. Plan B: Desperate, repeated kicks to head.

allowing you to grind out a gruelling victory. It's a brutal game of fisticuff man-chess.

New challenger

Each after bout post-mortem is brilliantly informative. You can study exactly how you brutalised your opponent with a sexy localised damage indicator, and there are plenty of statistics on offer, detailing shoots, reversals and submission attempts. Pulling off fast KOs, full mounts and back-from-the-brink recoveries earns you medals and points that help to improve your online rank. Perform particularly well and you can find yourself on the weekly leaderboard, mixing it with the best on the internet.

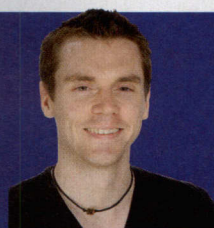
If there's a complaint it's that there's no specialist lobby for testing custom fighters against each other. Improving home-made characters to the standard of the UFC's elite takes ages, and until you do, throwing them in with the big boys is suicide.

The one time I came up against a custom character I earned my first 'no damage taken' medal and a lightning-fast award for pummelling him in the opening moments of the match, while the poor player sighed into his mic. It's called tough love, bucko.

The fact that he was sighing rather than swearing is typical of the crowd I met online. They're good natured and seem pretty knowledgeable – they'll not just select the highest rated characters, they also enjoy recreating more famous UFC matchups (if I chose Chuck Liddell people often went for Tito Ortiz, and Matt Serra if I went Georges St-Pierre). For a game that focuses on smashing people's faces, the online community are a remarkably chivalrous bunch, and it's their competitive and tactical

nous that makes UFC online so much more rewarding/crushing (delete as appropriate) than the single-player. See you in The Octagon.

Matt Elliott



Online round-up

With **Leon Hurley**



You see that face Balrog's pulling? It's the same expression I'd have if a man attacked me wearing a unitard designed to show off his nipples. It's also a good indicator of how I feel about paying for stuff that should be free. Like the extra costumes in **Street Fighter IV**.

They're meant to be freebies, things you get as a reward for playing. Paying for them is more like a punishment. The £9.99 'get everything' pack certainly doesn't feel like fan service. Somewhere there's a Capcom exec mwah-ha-ha-ing as he twirls a moustache and exits the boardroom with a swirl of his cape (maybe in a ball of twirling flame). Don't stand for it, people – we'll be paying for endings next.

Christ **The Chronicles Of Riddick:**

Assault On Dark Athena looks awful online. It's like fluorescent vomit sliding around the screen. Fair play to Starbreeze, though, I didn't know you could make videogames look this gaudy and fuzzy – so that's an achievement, of sorts. At least the Pitch Black mode is really good. One person plays as Riddick with night-vision and knives, while everyone else gets guns and a narrow torch beam to hunt him down in the dark. It's pretty scary and only spoiled by the one person who's always stupidly good at it – they end up being Riddick nearly all the time, and end the game 20 points ahead of everyone else.



There's no escaping the fact that the '50s setting and swing-cat jazz makes **The Godfather II** feel like a shootout on the set of Westside Story. I spent half the time running around New York warehouse districts hoping for a dance-off but had to make do with

clicking my fingers during the loading breaks. At least it's fun in a poorly animated sort of way – shoot a crate and you can watch it explode like a splintery balloon a full second after you hit it. But the basic action works, and there's a nice wall-hugging cover system. Best bit? Nice explosions. Which is the gaming equivalent of saying a girl has a nice personality.

Download of the month

If you love behind-the-scenes extras on DVDs then the **Killzone 2 Bullet 4D**

Interactive Ad is brilliant. It's also a great way of showing off PS3 to doubters. For zero pence (free = good, *always*) you get the recent TV spot for the game, showing a bullet travelling through a war zone, past fighting Helghast and ISA soldiers. And because it was rendered using the in-game engine you're able to play around on it and fiddle with the settings. You can slow it down to a standstill and move the camera around while flicking through a developer menu to switch off special effects or strip out textures. So if you ever wanted to know how PS3 makes pretty appear, now's your chance. See? Fun and educational.



summerofpsp.com



YOUR DOGZ. YOUR HAMSTERZ. YOUR CUDDLY SPECIAL EDITION PSP.™

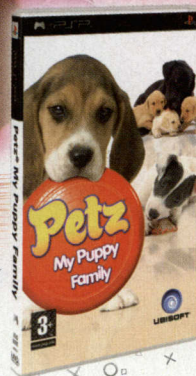
YOUR WHOLE WORLD IN YOUR HANDS

Adopt a cute puppy from a variety of breeds or pick up an adorable hamster then care for them as they were your own babies. Play, feed and nurture your dream PETZ on your very own Pearl White special edition PSP and take your new best friends everywhere you go!

Visit summerofpsp.com, and play the PETZ mini game, for your chance to win a fantastic holiday for you and your family, as well as loads of other prizes.



PSP
PlayStation®Portable



mail@opm



More poetry, threatening the prime minister with fruit, auto-aim annoyance and a suspect guide to surviving on a desert island.

System crash

A few issues ago you had a feature about how you would change games to make them better and I agreed with a lot of things you said. Then I came to Gran Turismo, which I'm a huge fan of (owning 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 Prologue). There was the obvious stuff about crashes and physics, and sure, it would be nice, but I'd be too terrified to drive at 200mph around Nürburgring just in case I ended up in a death-corkscrew screaming like a girl. It's bad enough as it is in GT4 – it's really

From PlayStation hopes and fears to technical queries, this is the place to come for answers

Email us at opm@futurenet.com or write to Letters, OPM, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

scary! You also had the caption, 'Why are crash physics still neglected?' Probably because the creators are perfectionists. Imagine how long it would take them to implement crash physics! No dent would ever be the same as the next. The detail would be insane. So give them a break. However GT5 turns out, it'll be a must-buy for me.

James Stevenson, by email

Thanks, 'James Stevenson'. Or should we say Polyphony Digital president Kazunori Yamauchi? Nice try, but the Tokyo stamp was a giveaway. As was the reek of petrol and tyre rubber.

James Stevenson is happy without damage in GT5.



Game of patience

Resident Evil 5 has left me in despair. "Why?" you may ask, "The game is great." Well yes, that's the problem, I've got another two-three years to wait for Resi 6, and as the games get bigger and better with the help of Blu-ray, it can only add to this torment. I know they use existing game engines and software to speed up the process, but can you see a day where they could produce a game in months instead of years? Until then, I'm off to press the button that will suspend me in carbonite. Fingers crossed.

Ian Parkinson, by email

Text OPM
Text 'Letters' then your message to 87474 – we'll include the best txts in the mag innit!



We toyed with the idea of giving you a subscription to the magazine to help pass the time, but it's not going to be much use if you're hung on mother's wall like Han Solo, is it? Based on the magazine-making cycle, we assume game development involves two years goofing around on the net and organising intra-office Pro Evo doubles games, followed by six months of sh*t-the-bed panic and red-flagged emails.

War cry

Godfather would like to know what the devil dog is going on regarding the release date of Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising! Godfather thinks the swell guys behind the game are dragging the release out so that war junkies like me take Gordon Brown hostage with a banana in a coat pocket demanding satisfaction. I pass my time with nightly screenings of Generation Kill, looking forward to the day I get to enforce the grooming standard and lead my own fire-team into battle with the coolness of Brad Colbert and the mental issues of Captain America, in what I believe will be the greatest war sim to hit any platform. I have mental issues of my own (brought on by the forever-changing release date) and my GP informs me the only cure for them is more information on Op Flashpoint.

Marseilles Agbebi, by email

What's on my hard drive



Cat May Partridge, by email

Music

Everything by Radiohead, Jimi Hendrix, Seasick Steve, Portishead and the Shadow Of The Colossus soundtrack.

Photo

South Park wallpaper, plus snaps from a trip to Camden Town and of the snow in February.

Video

The Final Fantasy XIII trailer is just one of many!

Game

LittleBigPlanet, Assassin's Creed, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Skate 2 to name a few, and tonnes of demos.

Friends

My mates who are fellow PS3 owners and a guy from New Zealand.

Tell us what's on your hard drive! Email us at opm@futurenet.com

Solid copy, Godfather. Listen, we're as disappointed as you, but Codemasters assures us the game will be Oscar Mike this autumn. Until then, have a subscription to OPM, and know that our finest fighting men (ie Leon) have been doing everything in their power to get hands-on with the latest build (see p51).

Visari verses

I was amazed at how awesome Killzone 2 was and how you didn't give it 10/10. Anyway, after reading that poem in OPM, I thought I'd give it a go. So here it is: Killzone? Killzone?

I shoot at you,
You shoot at me,
Is this how it was
meant to be?
I pull the trigger,
I smell your fear,
I know the end for you is near.
The bullets thud into your shoulder,
Your blood-drenched gurgles make me bolder.

You hit the ground,
Your corpse runs cold,
Don't mess with us, you have
been told.
A bullet burrows into my skull,
I stumble, falter, senses dull.
The human's thing this is my end,
Believe their vengeance for their friend.
But my veins pulse with Helghan blood,
Their veins course with putrid mud.
I roll to cover, sense returns,
I'll teach them a lesson that they
must learn.

I unclip a grenade, send it at the buffoons.
3,2,1... BOOM!!!

Calum Sims, by email

Assuming these aren't just hastily edited Decide lyrics, we seem to have inspired a poetry revolution among the young folk. In your FACE new poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy! Admittedly the poems so far have all been about guns, death and blood, but then so was most of Wilfred Owen's 'work'.

Off target

Am I the only one getting annoyed at silly auto-aim functions in games? When I first picked up a DualShock I couldn't hit a thing while playing great FPSs like Cold Winter and Black. Now, many years later, my hyper-tuned phalanges can slot a terrorist's cerebellum at 600 yards. The only thing tripping me up is the way some games artificially slow down the crosshair speed as it passes over an enemy – making it hard to track a



Like us, Ian Parkinson can't wait for more Resi.



Ask SONY

Q Can my PS3 get viruses when connected to the internet?

A There have been no reports of malicious software targeting PS3s. But we do recommend installing a firewall program between your internet router and your PS3, and regularly updating your virus definition files.

fast-moving target. Take Far Cry 2, where pinpointing an enemy results in a weird jerkiness – I find I can only reliably hit enemies who are still. Worse, there's no option to turn off this rubbish! In COD multiplayer, if you encounter two enemies with auto-aim on, the crosshair lingers stupidly halfway between the two, and it's tough to even shoot one of the buggers. At least in Modern Warfare auto-aim stays off, while in World At War, you need to deselect it every time you fire up a game. Bum!

Eoin Landers, by email

Dear developers, please stop annoying men who are really really good at shooting guns. That is all.

Island life

You're on a desert island, the full works of Shakespeare making a warm fire, with all your best tunes. But what games are you playing? I asked some mates and the results were weird. Only one PS3 game came up: LittleBigPlanet. The others were Tekken 3, SSX Tricky, and Crash Bandicoot Warped. These are all outdated technically, so why did they pick them? Because they are brilliant! When are game companies going to work out it's okay to go back to the classics? Give me SSX Tricky with better graphics, and undo the emo makeover given to Jin in Tekken. Give me a reason to save my poor PS3 as the ship sinks.

Beth Pritchard, by email

There's certainly a case for remaking old games with new graphics, as Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix showed, and SSX Tricky would be a great shout. Generally speaking though, we're pretty anti-retro around here. Look at how Hollywood constantly regurgitates old ideas and the danger is obvious. Give us new stuff or give us... well, not death. Just give us new stuff.



He'll shoot, with or without auto-aim.

Off the Wall



Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group



Sounds like...

"Modern Warfare 2 is gonna be awesome! It's gonna be like 'BOOM' and 'BANG' maybe even some 'VROOM!' Now that sounds like fun."

Rhys Purtil



Worms

"I went to the vet and told her I had worms and she said 'So do I, what's your PSN?'"

Johnboy Cole



Worms 2

"I went to the vet too and said 'My cat has worms and he's really bad', vet said, 'I'm not surprised, he's got no thumbs.'"

Jenivere Vamp Stunt



Fighting talk

"Ragdoll Kung Fu looks about as much fun as using a rusty spoon to pull your own eyes out."

Tommy Keough



Love Zone 2

"I borrowed Killzone 2. I LOVE IT. And I am not giving it back. It is mine now. Oh, so pretty, killing, flying space fascists."

Lewis Gibbett



Pants raider

"Lara still hasn't offered me a good, no-questions-asked rummage in my pants."

Meurig Hughes

Send your questions to:
opm@futurenet.com



PS3 Essential collection

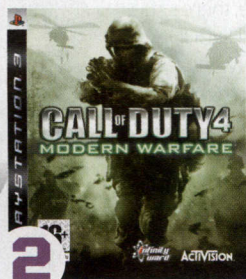
Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far



1 Platformer LittleBigPlanet

Unleash your inner Miyamoto by creating and sharing your own levels online using the brilliantly simple but canyon-deep editing tools in Sony's phenomenal platformer. Absolutely essential.

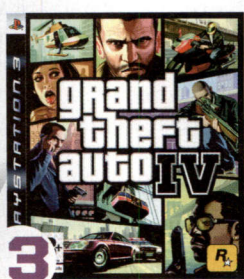
10 Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule



2 Shooter Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare

The SAS and US Marines invite you to fight the war on terror as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a modern-day setting. A beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.

10 Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward



3 Action Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA – the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour – polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.

10 Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar North



4 Stealth Metal Gear Solid 4 Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.

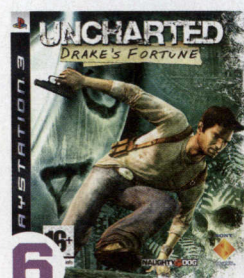
10 Pub Konami
Dev Konami Productions



5 Platformer Bioshock

Epic first-person adventure set in a ruined underwater city that combines brilliant genetic weapons with beautiful design, tons of atmosphere, and a genuinely affecting story.

10 Pub Take Two
Dev 2K Marin



6 Action-Adventure Uncharted Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and physical puzzling. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog



7 Shooter Killzone 2

Looks to die for, and endless waves of orange-eyed space Nazis aiming to ensure that's exactly what happens. Guerrilla's super-shooter is gritty, fierce and an utterly essential buy.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Guerrilla



8 Fighter Street Fighter IV

Thumping return to form for the series, satisfying both the hardcore and newcomers like a particularly supple lady of the night. Lush visuals and sweet online play make this essential.

9 Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom



9 Shooter Resistance 2

A sequel that masterfully surpasses the original. Nathan Hale returns to fight bigger aliens on American soil and delivers on gameplay, guns and polish.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac



10 Platformer Ratchet & Clank Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac

PS3 Celebs



Wheelman

Big Vin's had two games this year: the decent space murder Dark Athena, and the less-good arcade meh of Wheelman.



Ghostbusters

Full of celebs including, crucially, all four of the original Ghostbusters. The game's unexpectedly solid, too.



LittleBigPlanet

He doesn't appear physically, but the high-scoring PS3 exclusive is narrated by the comforting tones of Stephen Fry.



The Godfather The Don's Edition

Features unwise appearances from once-great actors Robert Duvall and James Caan.

Team Choice



UFC 2009 Undisputed

"It's no exaggeration to say that I know *nothing* about UFC. I do, however, love beat-'em-ups that are built around actual skill rather than 30-button mash-up insta-kills. Taking a man down with a kick to the neck from out of nowhere *never* gets boring. Who wants some?"

Leon Hurley
Commissioning editor

Power

Custom silicon harnesses crisp HD, ear-splitting audio, multi-processor might, and Blu-ray to deliver pure gaming perfection.

Connectivity

USB slots to plug in your motion-sensing Sixaxis pads and many other devices.

Online

Surf the net, message friends and download movies, music and expansion packs, plus demos and games from the PlayStation Store.



11

Music SingStar

Sony's much-loved karaoke game steps up to next-gen with a neater interface, online options and tons of tunes via SingStore. Outkast's Hey Ya and The Killers' Mr Brightside are highlights.

9 Pub Sony
Dev SCE Studios London

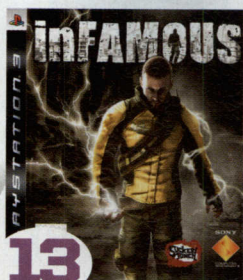


12

Action-RPG Fallout 3

The natural successor to Oblivion's RPG throne plays out in a post-apocalyptic America with Liam Neeson as your AWOL dad. An epic adventure without the self-indulgent sprawl.

9 Pub Bethesda Softworks
Dev Bethesda Game Studios

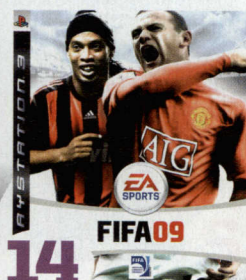


13

Action inFAMOUS

A big explosion tears Empire City to bits and gives hero Cole sparky superpowers in this sharp comic book adventure. Fluent climbing, frantic shooting and genuinely epic set-pieces make this a must-buy.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Sucker Punch

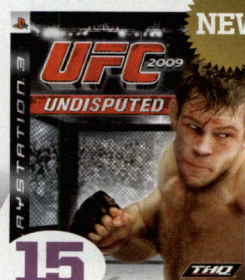


14

Sports FIFA 09

Impressively strong core gameplay on the pitch, ten-on-ten online matches and a new multiseason Be A Pro mode make this the top-scoring football choice on PS3.

9 Pub EA
Dev EA Canada



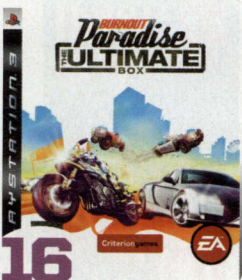
15

Sports UFC Undisputed 2009

Fantastically organic round of mixed martial arts fighting, where the lack of HUD and chance of being KO'd by a single punch is a great leveller.

9 Pub THQ
Dev Yuke's

127

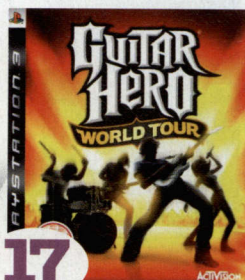


16

Racer Burnout Paradise The Ultimate Box

The best racer on PS3, now repackaged with tons of DLC and featuring motorbikes and night-time in addition to searingly fast racing. Simply beautiful.

9 Pub EA
Dev Criterion Games

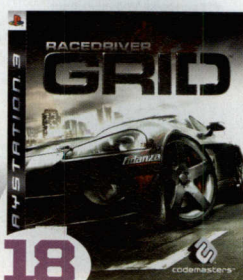


17

Music Guitar Hero World Tour

Bigger, better, rockier. Battles are out, the set list is super strong, drums and vocals mean you don't need to wait for Rock Band 2, plus there's a studio tool!

9 Pub Activision
Dev Neversoft

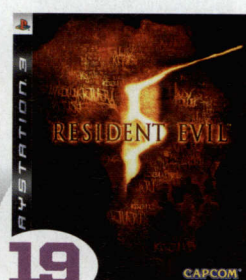


18

Racer Race Driver Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. Smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine-tuned cars combine to create the most satisfying racer yet on PS3.

9 Pub Codemasters
Dev Codemasters

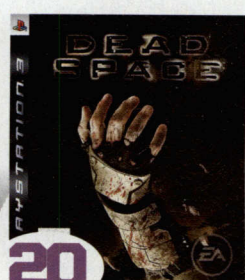


19

Action Resident Evil 5

Horror classic swaps dark corners for the glare of the African sun to reveal the origins of the virus., and the new co-op mode is relationship-destroying magic. "You let them eat me!"

8 Pub Capcom
Dev Capcom



20

Action Dead Space

Interstellar survival horror that robs from Bioshock, Resident Evil 4 and Event Horizon, but gets away with it thanks to looking beautiful, playing brilliantly and delivering some very big scares.

8 Pub EA
Dev EA Redwood Shores



Need For Speed Undercover

Deerily familiar street racing rehash, enlivened briefly by Maggie Q.



Command & Conquer Red Alert 3

Not only includes stars who are still working in *real* films, but also tons of hot leggy ladies, like Gemma Atkinson.



50 Cent Blood On The Sand

Outrageous but vastly improved second outing for the bullet-hoovering people's lyricist.



Guitar Hero Metallica

Apart from their undeniably rocking songs, the best thing about this GH tie-in is that it means no more hateful cartoon 'dudes'.



COD World At War

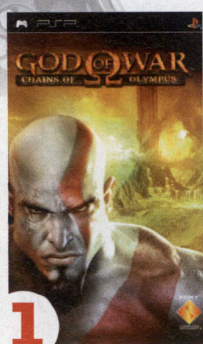
Kiefer Sutherland plays Sgt Roebuck, but more fun is Gary Oldman's Russian nutjob Sgt Reznov.



PSP

Essential collection

20 indispensable games for your handheld – try them or buy them, just make sure you play them



1

Action-Adventure
God of War
Chains Of Olympus

Bloody, god-slaying prequel that matches the PS2 games' vibrant visuals and frantic hack and slash action.

10 Pub Sony
Dev Ready At Dawn

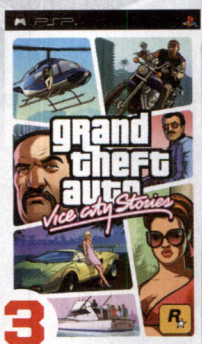


2

Strategy
Final Fantasy Tactics
The War Of Lions

A genuinely gripping plot, delicious-looking scenery and the oceanic 'job' system make this the best Fantasy so far.

10 Pub Square Enix
Dev Square Enix



3

Free-Roaming
Grand Theft Auto
Vice City Stories

Everything you'd expect from GTA, only portable. Compelling missions on foot or behind the wheel, plus plenty of '80s tunes.

10 Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar Leeds



4

Puzzler
Lumines II

Move blocks and clear the screen to a brilliantly eclectic soundtrack. New features and modes improve an addictive fusion of music and puzzling.

9 Pub Buena Vista
Dev Q Entertainment



5

Fighter
Tekken
Dark Resurrection

The console version has faded but Tekken's still a top game on PSP. Sharp looks and new moves make it a must.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Namco Bandai

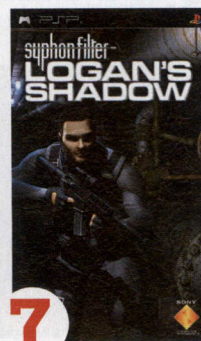


6

Platformer
Ratchet & Clank
Size Matters

The classic platforming duo storm PSP with their regular mix of super-polished gameplay and bizarre experimental weapons.

9 Pub Sony
Dev High Impact Games



7

Stealth-Strategy
Syphon Filter
Logan's Shadow

A top-class stealth sequel. Gabe returns with new weapons, new moves and the news that his partner could be a double agent.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Sony Bend



8

Racer
Ridge Racer

Powerslide around a mix of classic and new tracks. A great arcade racer where teasing out a drift while taking a corner at 135mph never gets dull.

9 Pub Namco Bandai
Dev Namco Bandai

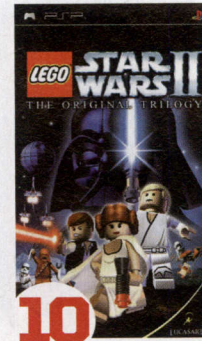


9

Platformer
Dexter

Jak's weasel-faced sidekick goes bug-hunting. Designed for PSP from the ground up, this is a good-looking adventure with loads of variety.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Ready At Dawn Studios



10

Platformer
Lego Star Wars II
The Original Trilogy

The original and best entire Star Wars trilogy retold using still-funny Lego blocks and sharp, playable platforming.

9 Pub LucasArts
Dev Traveller's Tales

PSP
Driving



Pursuit Force
Extreme Justice
Bonnet-stomping highway policing with no seatbelts whatsoever.



Need For Speed
Undercover
Police-chase spectacular from EA's speedy street race series.



Cars Mater-National
Pixar's big-eyed cars are still creepy as hell, but the open-world game is surprisingly good fun.



Vice City Stories
Is there anything better on PSP than riding along a Miami-style beach at sunset listening to Cutting Crew?

Reader Choice



Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops

"A game with a beautiful art style and an inspired recruitment system, MGS: Portable Ops never leaves my PSP."

Stewart Hitchcock
By email

Get connected

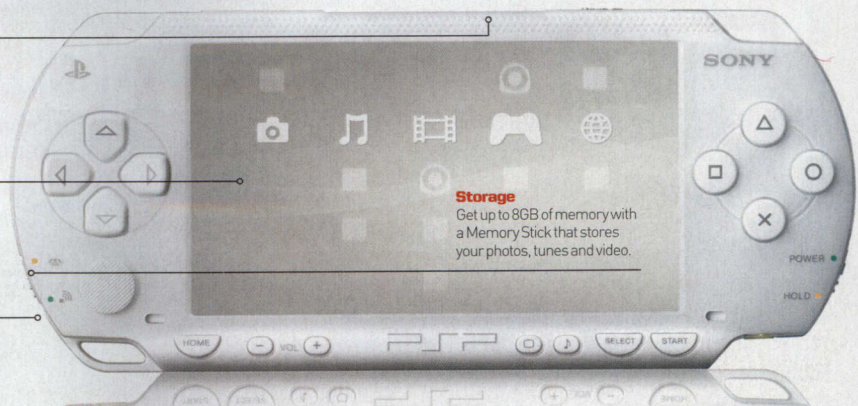
Hook up to PS3 or PC. Now you can transfer music, movies, pics, games and more.

Screen

PSP packs more power per polygon than PS2, and this little screen can cope with video too.

Wireless

The magical switch that opens up the internet for on-the-go net browsing and multiplayer.



Storage

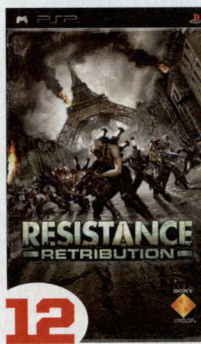
Get up to 8GB of memory with a Memory Stick that stores your photos, tunes and video.



Racer Flatout Head On

A Burnout steal that's better than the real thing (on PSP at least). There's racing in there too, but mostly this is about brilliant, gratuitous destruction.

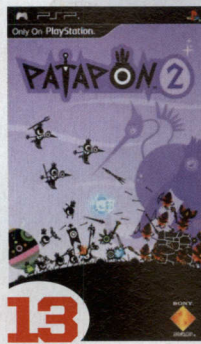
9 Pub Empire
Dev Bugbear



Rhythm Resistance Retribution

A smart link-up with the big -hitting PS3 sequel and smart auto-aiming makes this the best shooting PSP's nub can offer.

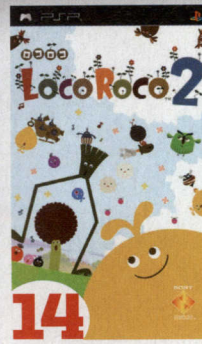
8 Pub Sony
Dev Sony Bend



Rhythm Patapon 2

A cartoony side-scrolling battler starring warring tribes of eyeball armies. As well as hypnotic rhythm controls, the sequel also features co-op multiplayer.

8 Pub Sony
Dev Pyramid



Platformer Locoroco 2

Tilt a pop-art 2D world to coax a herd of smiling blobs to safety to the tune of yabbering J-pop. Not as groundbreaking as the original, but still fun.

8 Pub Sony
Dev SCE Studios Japan



Sports FIFA 09

Edges PES 2009 as the best footy sim on PSP with a decent adaptation of PS3's Be A Pro mode and an embarrassment of licence riches, as usual.

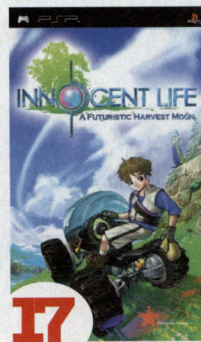
8 Pub EA
Dev EA



Sports Virtua Tennis World Tour

Simple, responsive controls make for instantly rewarding racket-twanging action. Career mode lends ruinous addiction.

8 Pub Sega
Dev Sumo Digital



RPG Innocent Life A Futuristic Harvest Moon

Teach a robot farmer to cultivate crops and raise animals in this gently seductive farming sim. Better than it sounds, promise.

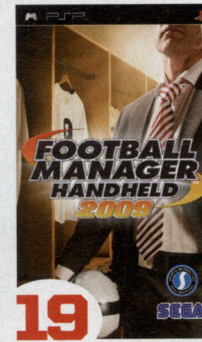
8 Pub Rising Star
Dev ArtePiazza



Racer Wipeout Pulse

Iconic weapon-assisted future racer reborn with new tracks and the ability to create custom soundtracks. Hard to master, but all the sweeter for it.

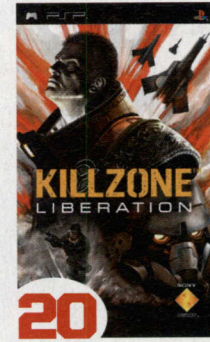
8 Pub Sony
Dev Sony Studio Liverpool



Sports Football Manager Handheld 2009

The 2D match engine imported from the PC version makes this life-eating obsession more dangerously playable than ever.

8 Pub Sega
Dev Sports Interactive



Third-Person Action Killzone Liberation

A savage third-person shooter that sees you fighting a future war on a barren planet. Brilliant weapons and vehicles.

8 Pub Sony
Dev Guerrilla Games

Ridge Racer

The best driving in arcade classic Ridge Racer is done at high speed, and sideways.

Wipeout Pulse

Beautifully designed hover cars of the future fight dirty in PSP's fastest racer.

Flatout Head On

Admittedly, as much about crashing as it is about racing, but for dirty, crunching thrills there's no parallel.

Juiced 2

Import racer with custom options so garish you can make your car look like a giant boiled sweet.

Midnight Club Los Angeles Remix

'Remix' here meaning 'includes Tokyo', which makes for some very pretty neon-lit speeding.



James Bond

PlayStation's spook supreme

He may have six faces and more unhappy exes than a divorce court lobby, but there is only one Bond. And while Ian Fleming's super spy has been variously entertaining and enervating with good (Dr No), bad (Tomorrow Never Dies) and downright ugly outings (Die Another Day, we're looking at you), his double life as a videogame hero has had similarly patchy quality control. But the simple fact is that even bad Bond is better than no Bond at all. Long may it continue.

#30
PLAYSTATION
LEGENDS
PlayStation
Official Magazine - UK

Notable missions

From Russia With Love

EA's final Bond before Activision took the licence, and it's surprisingly faithful to the film. Getting Connery to reprise the definitive Bond was just the olive in the vodka martini.



Everything Or Nothing

Easily the best Bond adventure, EON saw the likes of Brosnan, Dench, Dafoe, and the fit one from American Pie rattling through a decent story. The shooty bits were solid, too.



Quantum Of Solace

Not unlike Craig's take on 007, Activision's first outing was muscular, lean and almost entirely humourless. It was the game's flawless COD4 engine that raised it above the wooden Lazenbys of the videogame Bonds.

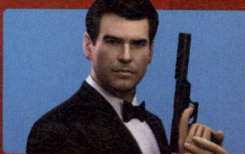


GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

Drunk with the power of a Bond licence, EA's hubris came in the shape of an anti-Bond game in which you played a disgraced double-oh equipped with a golden eye. Worse even than that sounds.



Best hardware



Walther P99

Purists may cite the PPK as the original 007 sidearm, but Bond games are shooters, not historical dramas, so we'll take the current model every time.



Q-Spider

EON's arachnid surveillance drone may be on the outer limits of gadget credibility, but it was cool to pilot and way more believable than an invisible Aston Martin.



The Golden Gun

Not strictly a 007 weapon, but since it's been a regular guest star of untold Bond multiplayer games, Scaramanga's piece demands its inclusion.



Aston Martin DB5

Even without Q's 'tweaks' the DB5 is an achingly desirable car. Driving it as Connery's Bond in From Russia With Love is pure filth.

Bond girls



Zoe Nightshade

The CIA agent is unique among videogame Bond girls. She appears alive and well in two separate games - Agent Under Fire and Nightfire. Her clone dies horribly, but we don't count that.



Xenia Onatopp

Along with the incomparable Pussy Galore, GoldenEye's Xenia Onatopp is pretty much the only good thing about Rogue Agent. EA, would it have killed you to give her a death-by-thighs finishing move?



Camille Montes

Given that Quantum Of Solace's Camille remains deadly, alive and independent at the end of the game, you could argue that she's scarcely a Bond girl at all. You *could*, but then again, y'know, she's gorgeous.



Katya Nadezhda

It's hard to tell what drives the Oxford nanotechnologist to become a traitor, but lack of oxygen to the brain caused by wearing a skin-tight silver suit could have something to do with it.

Bond trivia



When Sir Sean Connery recorded new voiceovers for EA's From Russia With Love in 2005, it was the first time he'd played 007 for 22 years.



Many of GoldenEye: Rogue Agent's locations were designed with the help of legendary Bond set designer, Ken Adam. The game still sucked.



While Nightfire might have Brosnan's Bond likeness, the super spy's voice is provided by, er, Maxwell Caulfield, 'star' of Grease 2 and Emmerdale.



'Goldeneye' is the name of the house in Jamaica where Ian Fleming wrote his Bond novels and short stories. The area is now an exclusive tourist resort.



Fleming's descriptions of Bond are vague, but Casino Royale's double agent Vesper Lynd remarks that he's like US composer Hoagy Carmichael.

ROBERTS SOLAR DAB PHILIPS CINEMA 21:9 LG GD900 CRYSTAL
HTC MAGIC BBC iPLAYER HD
AMAZON KINDLE 2
FLIP MINO HD LENOVO IDEAPAD S10E
TOMTOM GO 940 LIVE SAMSUNG LE40B650
CANON IXUS 980 IS SONY VAIO P-SERIES APPLE IPHONE 3G
LENOVO IDEA CENTRE A600 DELL ADAMO
SONY X-SERIES WALKMAN
MOTOROLA AURA LEICA M8.2
APPLE MACBOOK
SONY BRAVIA 7V1 NAVIGON 7310
NOKIA N97
ACER REVO PH CE 42PES0001D
GOOGLE ANDROID
ASUS EEE PC SEASHELL
SAMSUNG BD-P4600 CA
HTC TOUCH DIAMOND2
NINTENDO
EAT N TYPE CARBONITION
SAMSUNG LUXIA 7000
SONY ERICSSON
PIIO



The 3rd Annual **T3** Gadget Awards 2009

Vote for your favourite products in this year's awards
and you'll be entered into our fantastic awards gadget giveaway

Visit www.t3.com/awards to vote now for your chance to win

Official T3 Gadget Awards Partner



"ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING TITLES OF 2009"
GAMESMASTER

BATMAN™

ARKHAM ASYLUM

28TH AUGUST

www.batmanarkhamasyllum.com



PLAYSTATION 3



Games for Windows LIVE



XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE



rocksteady™

eidos

BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM Software © 2009 Eidos Interactive Ltd. Developed by Rocksteady Studios Ltd. Published by Eidos Interactive Ltd. Rocksteady and the Rocksteady logo are trademarks of Rocksteady Studios Ltd. Eidos and the Eidos logo are trademarks of Eidos Interactive Ltd. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved BATMAN and all characters, their distinctive likenesses, and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics © 2009. All Rights Reserved.



BATMAN and all characters, their likenesses, and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. © 2009. All Rights Reserved.
WB® LOGO, WB SHIELD, TM & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(S09)